

# **The Temporal Reference of Verbs in Direct Speech in Classical Hebrew**

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# Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	5
Abbreviations.....	6
List of tables and figures.....	7
<b>1 Introduction: Times and verbs.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>1.1 The problem of temporal reference in verbs in classical Hebrew.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>1.2 Attempts to solve the problem.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>1.3 Problems with the theories.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>1.4 A new approach.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>2 The theories of the Hebrew Verbal System.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>2.1 Overview of the theories.....</b>	<b>13</b>
2.1.1 The study of Hebrew verbs until the 18 <sup>th</sup> century.....	13
2.1.2 The study of the HVS until the early 20 <sup>th</sup> century.....	15
2.1.3 Modern views of the HVS.....	16
<b>2.2 Common assumptions regarding the HVS.....</b>	<b>20</b>
2.2.1 Tense: temporal reference or temporal meaning?.....	21
2.2.2 Narrative text as the primary corpus for study.....	21
2.2.3 The confusion of function and meaning.....	22
2.2.4 The idea that the two forms in Hebrew stand in a polar opposition.....	25
<b>2.3 Aspect: What it is and what it is not.....</b>	<b>26</b>
2.3.1 Aspect and tense.....	26
2.3.2 Aktionsart.....	29
2.3.3 The confusion of aspect and Aktionsart .....	31
<b>2.4 My view on the HVS: An aspect system.....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>2.5 Summary.....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>3 The text.....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>3.1 The text types.....</b>	<b>36</b>
3.1.1 About the textual types.....	36
3.1.2 A new approach: The advantages of studying direct speech.....	38
<b>3.2 Direct speech.....</b>	<b>40</b>
3.2.1 Reported speech.....	40
3.2.2 Direct speech in texts.....	41

3.2.3 The study of the Hebrew in direct speech.....	43
3.2.4 Introducing direct speech in the Hebrew Bible.....	43
<b>3.3 Discourse functions.....</b>	<b>45</b>
3.3.1 Temporal relationships.....	45
3.3.2 Logical relationships.....	46
<b>3.4 The corpus.....</b>	<b>47</b>
3.4.1 The criterion of direct speech.....	47
3.4.2 The criterion of temporal proximity.....	47
3.4.3 The criterion of genre variation.....	48
<b>3.5 Clauses introduced by הנה.....</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>3.6 Summary.....</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>4 Temporal reference in the text types.....</b>	<b>50</b>
4.1 The problem involved in the study of temporal reference of verbal forms.....	50
4.2 The way in which the temporal references are expressed in the text types.....	51
4.2.1 Discourse versus narrative.....	52
4.2.2 Poetry.....	55
4.3 What is the more neutral form of expression?.....	56
4.4 Conclusion.....	57
<b>5 Analysis of the verbs in Direct Speech.....</b>	<b>60</b>
5.1 How are the different temporal spheres expressed in direct speech?.....	60
5.2 The verbal forms.....	61
5.2.1 The <i>yiqtol</i> : The imperfective aspect.....	61
5.2.2 The <i>qatal</i> : The perfective aspect.....	64
5.2.3 Is the <i>qatal</i> or the <i>yiqtol</i> similar to the <i>wayyiqtol</i> ?.....	67
5.2.4 Temporal succession and the common perfective interpretation of the <i>wayyiqtol</i> .....	71
5.2.5 Is the <i>weqatal</i> similar in meaning to the <i>qatal</i> or to the <i>(we)yiqtol</i> ?.....	75
5.2.6 <i>Wayyiqtol</i> and <i>weqatal</i> signifying succession.....	82
5.2.7 Is the imperfective aspect of the participle similar to the imperfective aspect of the <i>yiqtol</i> ?.....	82
5.2.8 Aspect and temporal reference.....	84
5.3 Aktionsart and the choice of verbal forms.....	84
5.4 Intersection of situations.....	88

5.5 The “perfect” notion.....	91
5.6 Word order and modality.....	92
5.7 Summary and conclusions.....	92
<b>6 Conclusions.....</b>	<b>94</b>
Appendix.....	98
References.....	105
Abstract.....	110

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## Abbreviations

Am	Amos	Ps	Psalms
C	Deictic centre	QH	Qumran Hebrew (Dead Sea Scrolls)
CBH	Classical Biblical Hebrew		
CC	Conditional clause	RC	Result clause
CC-A	Apodosis of a conditional clause	SBH	Standard Biblical Hebrew (= CBH)
CC-P	Protasis of a conditional clause	TCO	Temporal coordination
DS	Direct speech	TR	Temporal reference
Epex.	Epexegetical	TS	Temporal succession
ET	Event time	Zech	Zechariah
Gen	Genesis	Zeph	Zephaniah
FC	Final clause	1 Chr	1 Chronicles
Fut	Future	2 Chr	2 Chronicles
hd	hendiadys	1 Ki	1 Kings
Ho	Hosea	2 Ki	2 Kings
HVS	The Hebrew verbal system	1 Sam	1 Samuel
Jo	Jonah	2 Sam	2 Samuel
JNSL	<i>Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages</i>		
JSOT	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>		
LBH	Late Biblical Hebrew		
LS	Logical succession		
Mi	Micah		
Mal	Malachi		
MP	The twelve minor prophets (Trei Asar)		
ns	non-successive		
P fut	Past in the future		
Pres	Present		

## List of tables and figures

Table 1	Verb classes based on Aktionsart.....	30
Table 2	The text types.....	38
Table 3	Percentage of verbs with past ns reference expressed by the <i>qatal</i> .....	53
Table 4	Percentage of verbs with past ns reference expressed by the <i>wayyiqtol</i> .....	53
Table 5	Percentage of verbs with past ns ref. expressed by the active participle.....	53
Table 6	Percentage of verbs with present reference expressed by the <i>qatal</i> .....	54
Table 7	Percentage of verbs with present reference expressed by the participle.....	54
Table 8	The text types modified.....	56
Figure 1	The relative distribution of temporal references in the texts: the <i>qatal</i> .....	58
Figure 2	The relative distribution of temporal references in the texts: the <i>yiqtol</i> .....	59
Figure 3	The verbal forms used with stative verbs with present reference.....	86
Figure 4	The verbal forms used with durative, telic verbs with present reference.....	87
Figure 5	The verbal forms used with durative, atelic verbs with present reference.....	88
Table A1	To what degree the different TRs in 1 Samuel are expressed by the <i>qatal</i> ...	98
Table A2	To what degree the different TRs in Psalms are expressed by the <i>qatal</i> .....	99
Table A3	To what degree the different TRs in Genesis are expressed by the <i>yiqtol</i> .....	99
Table A4	To what degree the different TRs in 1 Sam are expressed by the <i>weqatal</i> ...	100
Table A5	To what degree the different TRs in Psalms are expressed by the <i>yiqtol</i> .....	101
Table A6	To what degree the different TRs in Gen are expressed by the <i>wayyiqtol</i> ...	101
Table A7	To what degree the different TRs in MP are expressed by the <i>wayyiqtol</i> ....	102
Table A8	Temporal references in the texts and the temporal references of the <i>qatal</i> ...	103
Table A9	Temporal references in the texts and the temporal references of the <i>yiqtol</i> ..	104

## 1.0 Introduction: Times and verbs

There are few areas if any within the study of the classical Hebrew language that have received as much attention as its verbs and their relation with time. Despite more than one millennium of intense and dedicated study, there is still no consensus regarding even the most fundamental of questions. While we have attained much understanding of most other aspects of the Hebrew language in general, and its verbs in particular, the Hebrew verbal forms and their meanings continue to evade us. And as new scholars become intrigued by their mysterious behaviour, they continue to launch new ideas on how to understand it.

### 1.1 The problem of temporal reference in verbs in classical Hebrew

The main issue evolves around the two primary finite verbal forms. The labels traditionally assigned to them are the Latin terms *perfectum* and *imperfectum*. Because of the connotations these labels may invoke because of their widespread use across many languages, I use the neutral labels *qatal* and *yiqtol*, terms that are based on morphological form.

Most languages have forms of the verb placing an event in either past time or present or future time, and do so with a high degree of regularity. In other words, they are tense-based languages. Thus, the event is placed on the timeline relative to an external point, usually the location of the speaker on the timeline, which means that tense is an objective description. The relation between verbal form and time in classical Hebrew does not have the regularity expected in a tense language: each verbal form may refer to past, present or future time, or it may be modal. Despite the apparent universality of each form in their relation to time, there are certain patterns emerging when conducting a systematic study of them. When in the *qatal* form, verbs have past reference more often than present or future reference. With the *yiqtol*, the opposite is the case. That fact led in medieval times to an idea that the former is a past tense, and that the latter is a future or non-past tense. In order to facilitate the tense interpretation, exceptions were then attempted explained by the introduction of *ad hoc* hypotheses.

The lack of a consistent correlation between verbal form and temporal reference is not the only problem with the Hebrew verbal forms. A puzzling phenomenon found in classical Hebrew is the one regarding what is referred to as the “*waw* consecutive” (formerly “*waw* conversive”). Statistically, the most frequent interpretation of verbs in the *qatal* form is “X did”. This is what led in earlier times to the tense interpretation. When the conjunction *waw* “and” is prefixed to a *qatal* (*weqatal*), instead of the expected “and X did”, most often we



must understand it as “and X will do”. Likewise, when a *yiqtol* has prefixed *waw* (*wayyiqtol*), what we would expect, based on statistical patterns for the *yiqtol*, would be “and X will do”. This is not the case. In the vast majority of cases, we find that the correct interpretation must be “and X did”. If we see the system from the perspective of tense, it may seem that the conjunction *waw* has the ability to invert the meaning of the verbal forms (the “*waw* conversive”). Even though today’s scholars do not believe in the ability of the *waw* to invert the meaning of the forms, most of them still claim that the forms with and without *waw* have opposite meanings. This view has prevailed, even after scholars began to propose motivations for the uses of the forms other than that of tenses. No convincing evidence has, in my opinion, been presented to explain their alleged opposite meanings. If the two primary forms without *waw* and with *waw* have, as it is claimed, opposite meanings, the result is four forms. The question of meaning is therefore closely connected to the question of the number of forms. Are there two or four?

In the literature it is common to refer to “actions” or “events”. I will henceforth use the term *situation*. An “action” or “event” is easily associated with something dynamic. The term “situation” is better suited, because it includes both dynamic actions as well as states.

## 1.2 Attempts to solve the problem

Another solution regarding the use of the verbal forms is that the use of the forms is motivated, not by the location in time relative to another point on the timeline (i.e. tense), but by a subjective view of the situation itself. Thus, the situation is not objectively described as related to an external point, but the speaker focuses on something in the situation itself. Such an approach is not one of tense; it is rather one of *aspect*. One of the approaches in this direction is the opposition between viewing the situation as *complete* or *incomplete* (Waltke & O’Connor 1990:480). A less vague definition is the distinction between *completed* and *nascent* (inceptive). The opposition here is one between focusing on the end or the beginning of a situation (Driver 1998:5). There are other theories that are based neither on tense nor on aspect. One such theory distinguishes between the modal and the indicative (non-modal) (Joosten 2002).

The third of the major theories regarding the classical Hebrew verbal system is the one of discourse linguistics. The proponents of such approaches identify the meaning of the forms with their functions on the text level. They divide text into different levels based on its structure. In historical narrative, the forms involved in moving the action of the story forward,

called temporal succession, constitute the mainline or backbone of the narrative. Comments and additional information provided by the writer are considered supplemental material, and are thus part of the background (Hopper 1979:61). On the basis of this distinction the meaning of the verbal forms used for each purpose is identified.

In 2.1 I give an overview of the development of the most important theories regarding the classical Hebrew verbal system from the earliest times until the present. As we shall see, there are substantial problems involved in most of them.

### **1.3 Problems with the theories**

In 2.2 I will present a number of assumptions on which many of the views of the classical Hebrew verbal system are based. I will then argue that they are without a foundation and should be rejected.

One assumption is that narrative is better suited than other texts when the aim is to study the *meaning* of the verbal forms, a conception which is based on the fact that the temporal interpretation of verbs in narrative is more uniform than of verbs in other texts. This uniform interpretation, as I will demonstrate in chapter 4, is not related to the meaning of the verbal forms themselves. It is a property of the narrative text type, namely the one of mainly retelling events that occurred in the past. Moreover, the distribution of temporal references of the each verbal form in the corpus is dependent on the distribution of the temporal spheres seen as a whole in that text. In other words, e.g., the *qatal* has nearly always past reference in a text that consists mostly of past events. In a text where the temporal spheres are more evenly distributed between past, present and future, a higher percentage of *qatals* have temporal references other than past.

A second assumption is that all languages, including classical Hebrew, must have tenses. I follow Comrie's definition of tense as "grammaticalised expression of location in time" (Comrie 1985:9). Unfortunately, these first two assumptions tend to reinforce each other. If one assumes that all languages have tense systems, such a system appears to be most visible in narrative texts. Then, having restricted oneself to using narrative as the corpus for study, the uniformity of the interpretation of the forms leads scholars into the trap of assuming a tense view of the Hebrew forms.

The third assumption equals the use or function a form has with its (semantic) meaning. In other words, one fails to differentiate between semantics and pragmatics. One of the major issues discussed 2.2 is the alleged meaning of the *wayyiqtol* as one of moving the

course of action in a narrative forward. It is thus said to have temporal succession as its meaning. As I will argue, the feature of temporal succession is not a semantic property of the verbal form but a property of narrative text itself. The choice of verbal form for such a purpose is, on the other hand, motivated by the semantic meaning of the *wayyiqtol*.

The fourth assumption is a common one, but the problem associated with it is often left unaddressed. When there are in the Hebrew language two or four finite forms (an even number), the two (or four) must necessarily form a polar opposition. In other words, the meaning as well as use of the two forms is thought of as being mutually exclusive.

In 2.3 some further problems with the traditional views of the HVS will be discussed, especially the misunderstandings regarding the category of aspect. In 2.4 I will present my own views regarding the meaning of the verbal forms in classical Hebrew.

## **1.4 A new approach**

I began the work on this project with the working hypothesis that narrative is a type of text that is bound by certain linguistic conventions, as opposed to other text types that are not bound by the same conventions. There are several reasons for proposing such a hypothesis. Narrative text is restricted to almost exclusively retelling past events. These past events are retold in accordance with a rigid formula, where the backbone of the narrative is the ordering of temporally successive events, using the *wayyiqtol*. Further, I suggest, according to the working hypothesis, that *direct speech* is a text type which is not subject to a rigid formula. In addition, the distribution of the temporal spheres in the verbs is a lot more balanced than in narrative. I am therefore of the opinion that direct speech is a more neutral text type, suited for a study of the meaning of the verbal forms. Direct speech is defined as an utterance by a character of the biblical text, e.g., as part of a dialogue, as it is reported in the text. The first occurrence of direct speech in the Hebrew Bible is found in Gen 1.3 (direct speech in *italics*): “God said, ‘*Let there be light*’; and there was light”. In chapter 3, I provide more exact definitions of direct speech, and give an overview of the different ways in which direct speech can be identified in the text of the Hebrew Bible.

In order to test the validity of the working hypothesis, I classify the text of my corpus into different textual types, such as narrative, prophetic speech, poetic speech and direct speech. Chapter 4 is concerned with the investigation into how temporal reference (past, present and future) is expressed in these different text types. This is done in order to find out

whether there are any differences or similarities between the text types in the use of the forms. My corpus is from Genesis, 1 and 2 Samuel, the twelve minor prophets and Psalms.

In chapter 5 I conduct an analysis of the use of the verbal forms in direct speech, and what it can say about the meaning of the forms. The main issue dealt with here is the question of the meaning of, and the relation between, the four forms, and consequently, the question of how many there finite forms there are, whether there are two or four.

## 2.0 The theories of the Hebrew Verbal System

In this chapter I will give an overview of the common views of the Hebrew verbal system from the 10<sup>th</sup> century until today. Then I will point out the theoretical and methodological problems associated with these, and argue that they constitute major obstacles on the way to discover the true nature of the verbal system.

### 2.1 Overview of the theories

I will attempt here to present in brief the most important theories and views regarding the Hebrew verbal system. I will not go into depth in any of them, but present their most important points regarding especially the finite verbal forms.

#### 2.1.1 The study of Hebrew verbs until the 18<sup>th</sup> century

The study of the Hebrew language has a long history. Traces of it can be found in texts as early as the Talmud and the Midrashim. Not to mention the efforts made by the masoretes. At that time the study of Hebrew was done in order to clarify the biblical text, and may in part have been a reaction to the propagation of the Karaite movement and to Christian missionaries (Jones 1983:1). A systematic study of its grammar began in the 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> century among the Jews in the Arabic-speaking world. Most notable among these Hebraists was Saadia Gaon (882-942). He introduced the study of Hebrew as a scientific discipline (Chomsky 1945:281). During the next few centuries, important insights into the language were gained. Judah Ḥayyuj (940-1010) discovered the system of the tri-radical root upon which Hebrew words are built, an insight without which the structure of the Hebrew language cannot be understood. From this time, various grammarians began to develop the ordering of verbs into the seven stems, known as *binyanim* (Chomsky 1945:283).

Despite all the research done to the Hebrew language from the very beginning until now, and all the insights that have been gained during the last millennium, there is still one major obstacle that remains before we have reached an adequate understanding of the classical Hebrew language. The problem here alluded to is the difficulty with the categories of the *times* in the verbal action. It seemed to the medieval scholars that each of the verbal forms in the Hebrew Bible could be used to refer to actions in any time sphere. The form occurring statistically most often with past reference, the *qatal*, could be used to refer to actions in e.g., the future, and the form most often occurring with future reference, *yiqtol*, could refer to actions in the present or past. In the common languages of the Jews in that time, Arabic and

Mishnaic Hebrew, one saw that the different forms were used consistently with regard to the times that they referred. In other words, they were languages with a tense system. In this respect, the biblical language thus differed considerably from other known languages. The knowledge of the verbal system in the two languages most thoroughly known, lead to the assumption that the verbal forms of every language's formal system must necessarily have the ability to express the temporal reference of the action referred to. Based upon this assumption one tried to impose a tense system upon the classical Hebrew verbal forms also.

Inductive and quantitative studies of the verbs revealed certain patterns in terms of temporal reference that often corroborated the established views. When this view was established, certain *ad hoc* solutions were introduced in order to explain the cases that did not fit this view of the forms. For the future interpretations of the *qatal* to be explained, concept of the so-called "prophetic past" ("prophetic perfect") was introduced. A future event expressed by means of the alleged past form was portrayed by the speaker as being so certain that it was as if it had already happened.

Then there was the problem of the "inverted tenses". When the conjunction *waw* "and" was connected to a verb, it seemed to have an effect different to the merely copulative force that the conjunction had when prefixed to e.g., a noun. When connected to a verb, it seemed to invert the temporal reference of the verb, often accompanied by a stress shift in the verb. Thus, the "past" form was converted into a "future" form, and the "future" was converted into a "past". To further complicate matters, the conjunction did not always have the effect of converting the meaning, which gave rise to a division of the conjunction into two different ones. The purely connective *waw* was called the *waw ḥibbur* "waw of conjunction", and the one with a seemingly converting force was called the *waw hippuk* "waw of inversion". Thus, in addition to the two primary forms *qatal* and *yiqtol*, we get, with *waw hippuk*, the two "converted" forms *wayyiqtol* and the *weqatal*. In a form that is subject to stress shift, we have in the first person singular *weqatalti*. With *waw ḥibbur*, the original stress pattern is retained, i.e., *weqatalti*. The *yiqtol* with *waw ḥibbur* becomes *weyiqtol*.

In the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, Christian theologians and humanists began to show their interest in the study of Hebrew grammar, and one of the first of them was Johann Reuchlin (1455-1522). They adopted the *waw* conversive theory and continued to view the verbal forms as tenses (McFall 1982:xii). As we can see, the problem of the Hebrew verbal forms is twofold: The first question is whether the system is based on tense or on some other idea. The second is the problem of the conversive theory, which is related to the rather fundamental issue regarding the number of finite verbal forms, whether there are two or four. At the outset,

it would seem that we are dealing with two forms that have the ability to be converted. However, somewhere along the way, the different functions of the two converted and the two unconverted, original, forms lead to the idea that Hebrew has four finite verbal forms. This view has been long lived and has not been put down, even until our days.

### **2.1.2 The study of the Hebrew Verbal System until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century**

It was not until the second part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century that some scholars began to question the established views. The pervasiveness of the theory may be due to the explanatory power that it seemed to have. It made easier the translation of verbs in the Bible into European languages. Moreover, the fact that this view had been retained for almost a thousand years would have made it a daring task for anyone attempting to question it (McFall 1982:21). In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, some scholars opposed the conversive theory, which they regarded as being improbable. The mismatch between temporal reference of a large number of verbs and the alleged meaning of the forms lead some to explain the problem by the use of relative tenses, i.e., one situation was seen as future or past relative to another. In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, Heinrich Ewald tried to find a solution that did not involve tense, and introduced the terms “perfectum” and “imperfectum” (McFall 1982:44). Despite the new terminology, his theory seems somehow to be bound to (deictic) time.

One of the first to come up with an alternative to a tense theory was S. R. Driver. He took the verbal forms to represent, not an *order* of time, but a *kind* of time, as he put it (Driver 1998:2). His system was not one of deictic time, rather it was one in which the writer or speaker, at his own will, could choose how to portray a situation, and in this respect it was subjective. Each form, according to his theory, focuses on a particular phase of the situation described. The *yiqtol* focuses on the beginning, the participle indicates continuance, and the *qatal* focuses on the end (completion) of the situation. In modern terminology, he viewed the forms as expressing *aspect*, rather than tense. He saw the *wayyiqtol* as merely a *yiqtol* with a prefixed *waw*. The *weqatal*, however, he viewed as two forms, distinguished from each other by a change in the stress position. Thus, Driver held that there are three finite forms in Hebrew. Driver’s view of the forms can be said to distinguish between situations seen as completed versus not completed, or incomplete. This idea is vague and the opposition completed – incomplete easily leads to confusion. Also, is not easy to test against the data. Despite its weaknesses, Driver’s view has remained one of the most influential until this day.

After the discovery of the Akkadian language in 1841, scholars of Hebrew began to compare it to Hebrew. J.A. Knudtzon was the one who introduced the historical-comparative

method to the problems of Hebrew verbs (McFall 1982:91). He contended that the wide range of temporal references in the *yiqtol* form is due to a twofold origin of the form. One form, morphologically long, represented the present. The other, shorter form represented past time, as it appears to do in Akkadian. In Hebrew, the two have merged into one. The long form can be seen in present and future uses in classical Hebrew, the short form can be seen in e.g., the *wayyiqtol*. Knudtzon's view regarding the two principal forms, *qatal* and *yiqtol*, was one of stating the mere fact of the situation and the portrayal of the situation as dynamic, respectively (Knudtzon 1892:49, 54).

The historical-comparative theory led others to revert to a tense view of the Hebrew verbal system. Among these were Hans Bauer and G. R. Driver, who was the son of S. R. Driver. G. R. Driver tried to solve the problems by proposing that Hebrew is a hybrid of two other Semitic languages, Aramaic and Akkadian (Furuli 2005:14). Others thought that the verbal system consisted of both tenses and aspects. Harris Birkeland took the *qatal* and the *yiqtol* to be aspects, "the perfect and the imperfect do not say anything about time, they are two ways of visualizing the verbal idea". The *wayyiqtol* and the *weqatal* he saw as tenses. He described the *qatal* ("perfect") as a form that emphasizes the beginning of the situation (cf. the contrast to Driver's focus on completion). The *yiqtol* ("imperfect") is a line with emphasis on neither beginning nor end. He imagined the *qatal* as a photo in a slideshow, the *yiqtol* he compared with a film (Birkeland 1950:108).

Because of the diversity of uses of each form, and the predominance of each of them in regard to time, some have difficulties in ascribing to them one basic meaning alone. According to T. Muraoka, in his revision of P. Joüon's 1923 grammar, the two forms express both tense and aspect. The *qatal* is, according to them, a past tense when used with dynamic verbs in the past. When used with stative verbs, it is a present tense. When it has present or future reference, it expresses instantaneous or solitary action. Likewise, the *yiqtol* is a future tense when it has future reference. When it has present reference, it has both a time value and an aspect value. With past reference, it has only aspect value; the one that expresses repeated or "protracted action" (Joüon/Muraoka 1996:355). Their reasoning is somewhat circular. It can be reduced to: "When the *qatal* has past reference, it has past *meaning*, i.e. past time is what it *signals*. When it has future reference, it signals something else."

### 2.1.3 Modern views of the Hebrew Verbal System

In the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, theories appeared that reduced the number of forms from three or four down to two. They viewed the *wayyiqtol* and the *weqatal* as a *yiqtol* and a *qatal*



with a conjunction, respectively. One of these, Carl Brockelmann, introduced the terms *constative* for the *qatal* and *cursive* for the *yiqtol*. He viewed the forms as subjective viewpoints (aspects). The constative aspect, he says, “konstatiiert [...] Handlungen oder Vorgänge” (Brockelmann 1956:39), the cursive aspect as “den Verlauf einer Handlung schildernd” (“depicting the course of an action”) (Brockelmann 1956:42). Rudolf Meyer held that the origins of the two forms originally had the meaning of *konstativ* versus *kursiv*, but in his grammar he chooses to characterize them as punctual and durative, respectively (Meyer 1992:382).

Around the same time, several other scholars presented their theories. The ones of Diethelm Michel and of Frithiof Rundgren are neither aspectual nor based on tense. Rundgren published a theory in 1961, which based itself on the opposition between stative and dynamic, using a deductive method. Michel, on the other hand, used an inductive method, analyzing the verbs in Psalms. In doing that, he departed from the common method among Hebraists of using narrative as corpus. He first characterized the *qatal* as *independent*, expressing a situation that is important in itself (Michel 1960:53). Michel had an idea that the two forms were in a polar opposition. Therefore, since the *qatal* is independent, the *yiqtol* must naturally be *dependent* (Michel 1960:128). Like Brockelmann, Michel viewed the *waw* in the *weqatal* and the *wayyiqtol* as no more than a normal conjunction.

Among more recent theories the one found in the Hebrew syntax of B. Waltke and M. O’Connor must be mentioned. They take the *qatal* as perfective, viewing it as a whole. The perfective portrays the situation as *complete*, and not as *completed*, as according to S. R. Driver (Waltke & O’Connor 1990:480). For the *yiqtol* they use the term *non-perfective* instead of imperfective, because of the wide range of uses that the form has. It may be imperfective, denote dependency, or be modal (Waltke & O’Connor 1990:496). Thus, they do not support the polar opposition view of e.g., Michel.

C. H. J. van der Merwe (Van der Merwe *et al* 2002:143) states that he will not follow one specific theory in his grammar. He therefore, it seems, bases his description on statistics. On such a basis, he relates the *qatal* to past time, which equals completed action (in the past). The *yiqtol* he relates to non-past time, which equals non-complete action. The last two grammars mentioned here, do both view Hebrew as having four finite forms. Thus, the *wayyiqtol* equals the *qatal*, and the *weqatal* equals the *yiqtol*. The problem with basing the meaning of the forms on the basis of statistical patterns will be addressed in chapter 4.

So far, three main approaches to the problem have been mentioned. These are the tense approach, the aspect approach and the historical-comparative approach. These three are

the traditional approaches to the study of the Hebrew verbal system. They are all associated with “sentence grammar”, and are based on the assumption that “the sentence is the largest unit of grammatical description” (Lyons 1968:172).

Other approaches have been mentioned, and yet others do exist, such as Jan Joosten’s theory. He makes an opposition of modal versus indicative. In his system, the *qatal* and *wayyiqtol* are indicative, while the *yiqtol* and *weqatal* are modal (Joosten 2002:67). Galia Hataav’s theory has aspect, modality and temporal succession as its main distinctions (Hataav 1997). Y. Endo makes a three-way system of tense, aspect and temporal succession, being those of past versus non-past, complete versus incomplete, and sequential versus non-sequential (i.e., successive – non-successive) (Endo 1996:321).

Discourse analysis was introduced into the study of the Hebrew verbal system in the 1970s. From that time onward, it has grown to be possibly the most widespread method to the study of classical Hebrew. The discourse approach is based on the assumption, among others, that the meaning of a verbal form can be found only by studying the uses or functions of that form *within its context*.

There are several possible reasons why this approach was introduced. Apart from the fact that many scholars of Hebrew felt that the problems pertaining to the times of the Hebrew verb were still far from solved, influences from general linguistics contributed to the development of the movement. In the last decades before the emergence of discourse linguistics within Hebrew studies, considerable progress was made in the study on the levels of phonology and morphology. In the case of Hebrew, this was not true to the same extent on the level of syntax, despite the tremendous progress made in syntax studies in general linguistics. There are different levels in the structure of language (phonology, morphology, syntax), and the study of any one of these can be elucidated by the study of one or more of the other levels. Kirk E. Lowery suggests that the study of syntax needs to be followed by the study of a yet higher level of language structure, the level of discourse (Lowery 1994:107).

Discourse linguists occupy themselves with exploring the uses or functions of the different verbal forms in the framework of the text level. They also investigate the different uses that a particular verbal form may have in the different text types that they propose. Paul J. Hopper distinguishes between “foreground” and “background”. The foreground component consists of “sequential events which are central to the unfolding of the narrative”, while the background consists of comments and descriptions, as well as situations that are simultaneous with foregrounded events. In the languages Hopper has studied, each of the two components

are expressed by its own aspectual verbal form, the perfective and the imperfective (Hopper 1979).

Alviero Niccacci, in his work with narrative texts, uses two criteria to analyze the verbal system of Hebrew. The first criterion is the position of the finite verb within the sentence; the other is the two “communication levels” which he calls “narrative” and “direct speech”. Each of these communication levels has a mainline and a subsidiary line of communication. Sentences with verbs in the first position constitute the mainline, and sentences without a verb in first position correspond to the subsidiary line. These two communications levels correspond roughly to Hopper’s foreground – background distinction, and according to Niccacci, each of the two text types make use of its own set of verbal forms. Thus, e.g., in narrative, a *wayyiqtol*, which stands in initial position, constitutes the mainline of communication, and a sentence with e.g., a *qatal* in the second position constitutes the subsidiary line (Niccacci 1994).

Robert E. Longacre suggests a higher number of text types in classical Hebrew. He claims that at least four different text types must be distinguished. Within each of these, the clauses can be ranked on a scale from most relevant for the discourse, to least relevant. In the case of Hebrew narrative discourse, the clauses are ranked from the most dynamic to the most static (Longacre 1989:60). Thus, his system is rather complicated. All the text types, including all the levels in his hierarchy, form a system in which the meaning of each form is defined based on its place within the system.

Longacre says about the use of the verbal forms: “the uses of given tense/aspect/mood form are most surely and concretely described in relation to a given text type” (Longacre 1989:59). This approach stands in contrast to the one followed by traditional grammarians, who try to find the meaning of the forms based on the study of their functions on the level of the sentence.

The incredible span of the selected theories and views presented in this chapter gives an indication of the difficulties that the notion of time represents in the study of the Hebrew verbal system. Many of these theories have given us much insight and new perspectives regarding these issues. However, in my opinion, none of them offers a system that can answer the questions in an adequate way. One of the reasons is that some of the theories have substantial weaknesses, or are based on assumptions that do not withstand scrutiny. These weaknesses as well as assumptions will be investigated in the following chapter.

## 2.2 Common assumptions regarding the HVS

Most theories regarding the Hebrew verbal system hold certain ideas to be self-evident, and several of these are seldom or never questioned in the study of classical Hebrew verbs. Four of the most critical assumptions evident in the literature will be discussed in 2.2.

### 2.2.1 Tense: temporal reference or temporal meaning?

As mentioned in 2.1, the study of Hebrew from its beginning was based on an assumption that all languages are tense languages, and that came to include Hebrew. This assumption was based upon the knowledge of other languages of the day, which had tenses. The assumption was corroborated by the statistical patterns that emerged from the uses of the verbal forms in the Hebrew Bible. Even though, in time, some were discontent with the tense view and developed other theories, it does still have followers today. We shall see later, especially in chapter 4, why a tense approach has no sound basis. The assumption of tenses is related to another assumption (2.2.2), that of the differences between the text types in the Hebrew Bible. In works on the meanings of the Hebrew verbal forms, the authors often talk about e.g., “past meaning” or “past tense”. This may be a legitimate view of the forms. However, in many cases there is confusion as to exactly what the authors mean by it, and one may come across these expressions in works with very different views on the subject of the Hebrew verbal forms.

A situation has past (temporal) reference if it holds before the moment of speech. If it holds after the moment of speech, it has future reference. If it has present reference, the situation contains the moment of speech. Thus, the moment of speech intersects the situation. This has, at the outset, nothing to do with tense.

Tense, on the other hand, is defined as “grammaticalised expression of location in time” (Comrie 1985:9). In other words, a tense form is a verbal form where the temporal location of the situation referred to is part of the form’s semantic (uncancellable) meaning (see 2.2.3). The location of the situation on the timeline (known as *event time* or *ET*, from H. Reichenbach’s treatment of tense) is seen from the perspective of a vantage point outside the situation itself. This vantage point is called the *deictic centre* (*C*), and it corresponds in most cases to the time of the utterance (Reichenbach 1947:288). Such a system, in which the location of a situation is indicated from the perspective of external vantage point, is called a *deictic system* (from Greek “to point out”). Tense is therefore a deictic system. Where the

author has a tense view of the forms, the designations “past meaning” and “past tense” may be appropriate, but in other cases, such use of terminology is misguided.

Joüon/Muraoka is an example of someone who confounds temporal reference and temporal meaning, or tense. They note that the use of the *yiqtol* has greater variation than the *qatal*. On this basis, he draws the conclusion that “the *yiqtol* has a less precise time value than the *qatal*” (Joüon/Muraoka 1996:372). The problem with their conclusion is that when both forms may refer to all three temporal spheres, none of them has a time value at all.

### **2.2.2 Narrative text as the primary corpus for study**

The assumption that Hebrew has tenses is related to another assumption. The text of the Hebrew Bible can be classified into several different literary genres or text types, such as historical narrative, prophecy, wisdom literature and poetry. Within the field of Hebrew studies, all of these texts have generally been used as corpus. In the study of the meaning of the verbal forms, however, most scholars are of the opinion that certain texts are suitable for study, while others should be avoided. The text type commonly preferred is narrative text, while poetry is the text type that is often avoided (e.g., Joüon/Muraoka 1996:353). This view bases itself on the differences in the use of the forms in each text type. As will be argued in chapter 4, the distribution of temporal references that each verbal forms has in a particular text, depends on the relative distribution of the temporal spheres in that text, irrespective of verbal form. Thus, if a text has a high percentage of events with past reference (e.g., narrative), the percentage of past reference in any verbal form will be correspondingly high, and vice versa. The result is that in a text type with a high degree of uniformity in terms of temporal references (again narrative), the interpretation for each form will be high also. The uniformity of interpretation has lead to the aversion among many scholars against basing studies of the meaning of verbal forms on e.g., poetry or prophetic texts. In chapter 4, I will show that this aversion is unjustified, because it is based on a faulty method of interpreting statistical data. The common approach found in grammars is to take each verbal form as a point of departure and list all the uses and temporal references that the form may have in the biblical text. As pointed out above, such an approach is unreliable, because the relative distribution of the three temporal spheres is different from text to text, depending on the nature of the text. If the author of a grammar uses examples from narrative, his or her interpretation of a form may be that it should be classified as a “past tense”. If a different text with a different distribution of the temporal spheres had been used, the same form could have been decided to be a “present tense”. It seems obvious that we need a different approach. I

propose to take, instead of verbal form, temporal reference as a point of departure. In doing so, the potential differences in the way the various text types express past, present and future will be apparent. With this method, the analysis is not affected by variations in distribution of the temporal spheres in a text.

The result of my analysis shows that the use of narrative in such studies should be avoided or at least be done with caution. Rather, other text types are better suited for serving as a corpus.

### **2.2.3 The confusion of function and meaning**

A third assumption in which many more scholars are still trapped, is the idea that the function or the use that a verbal form has, equals its *meaning*. The function of a verbal form can be explored on several levels. It may be in a clause or in the relation between clauses, it may be between whole sentences, or it may be the form's function within a text as a whole. The uses that a form may have, on one or more levels, can give some clues as to its meaning, but no function of any form, on any level, does equal its semantic meaning.

Discourse linguists, as we have seen, base their interpretations of meaning on the functions of the forms in a text. What they occupy themselves with, is the pragmatics of the verbal forms. Roy L. Heller puts it nicely. He says that "discourse linguists [...] take their basic stance toward language by asking 'What does this verbal form/word/clause do?' instead of asking 'What does this verbal form/word/clause mean?'" (Heller 2004:2).

In other words, they are dealing with the component of meaning which is derived from the context of the verb, and which may change with different contexts. Such approaches are useful in order to find out how the forms are used, but it does not necessarily say much about the part of the meaning that is constant at a particular stage in the language's development. This is the semantic meaning, and it does not change in different contexts. Thus, it is uncancellable. I adopt Paul Grice's (Grice 1975:57) definition of semantic meaning, here in M. B. Olsen's wording: "semantic meanings may not be canceled without contradiction or reinforced without redundancy" (Olsen 1997:17). Olsen proposes to add to a sentence a certain feature in order to find out whether it is part of a word's semantic meaning or not. Her own example is the verb "to plod". In order to find out whether e.g., the idea of "slow" is inherent in the verb's meaning, Olsen constructs the following four sentences (Olsen 1997:17):

- a) \*Elsie plodded along, but not slowly.
- b) \*Elsie plodded along, slowly.

Sentence (a) contradicts itself, while (b) has a redundant adverbial. This shows that Grice's principle in this case shows that the idea of "slow" is in fact part of the semantic meaning of the verb "to plod". She further provides another two sentences,

- c) Margaret plodded along, although she wasn't tired.
- d) Margaret plodded along; she was very tired.

The aim, obviously, is to find out whether the idea of "tired" is part of the semantic meaning of the verb "to plod". In (c) the negation of the adjective does not produce a contradiction, and in (d) it does not render the sentence redundant. Consequently, we know that the idea "tired" is not part of the verb's semantic meaning. It is rather pragmatic.

Discourse linguists working on classical Hebrew take little interest in the semantic meaning that the verbal forms must have, as we have seen. As an example of their general disregard for semantics, one could mention Niccacci's treatment of the *weyiqtol*. There is universal agreement among Hebraists to the fact that the *weyiqtol* is merely a *yiqtol* with prefixed *waw*, and that it has exactly the same meaning as the *yiqtol* without prefixed *waw*. Yet Niccacci categorizes it as a separate verbal form within his discourse system (Niccacci 1990:88). When discourse linguists relate the function of a form on a level as high as the discourse level to the values of the verbal forms, the way to their true meaning becomes blurred. Even though more and more scholars have adopted discourse linguistics as their method in recent decades, they are not, with their disregard for semantics, without critics. John Cook says: "The difficulty in distinguishing causation from correlation lies in the general neglect of semantics by discourse theories" (Cook 2004:249).

The problem, then, is whether the function that the forms have in discourse equals the meaning of the forms, or if this relation has some other basis. Pamela Downing states that, "it is sometimes difficult to determine whether the relationship between the linguistic form and the discourse factor is causal or merely correlational" (Downing 1995:6). An answer to that question has been given by Suzanne Fleischman, who thinks that the functions of a verbal form are not accidental, but says that she views the functions of the verbal forms in narrative as "motivated extensions of the *meanings* of those categories". These extensions, she says, "may ultimately contribute to a reshaping of the basic meanings" (Fleischman 1990:23).

Bernard Comrie says something along the same lines, but insists that a solid understanding of the meaning of the forms is needed in order to understand their discourse functions (Comrie 1986:21).

In my opinion, Comrie is correct. The values of the verbal forms can be found in studying the function of the forms on a lower level than the discourse level. An analysis on the sentence level is a better method to discover the semantic meaning of the forms. In addition, other relationships between the forms can be found. These relationships may shed light on what was in earlier times referred to as the problem of the “*waw* conversive”, or *waw hippuk*. A possible solution (or at least a step on the way) to the problem with connecting discourse function and meaning will be discussed later, in 5.2.4.

Another scholar working within the framework of discourse analysis is Yoshinobu Endo. What separates him from many other discourse linguists is that his foremost distinction is between what he calls sequentiality versus non-sequentiality. He has this to say about discourse theories in general (Endo 1996:324):

So far as the “backgrounding – foregrounding” theory (Niccacci, Longacre, *et al.*) is concerned, this distinction does not seem to be a determinative factor for the choice of the verbal forms. This distinction seems to be a secondary phenomenon or a by-product of the distinction between sequentiality and non-sequentiality. In fact, foreground information tends to be described with a chain of actions, and one could observe that even sequential forms (e.g. waYYIQTOL) may be employed not for the mainline of the story, but for background information

Endo can be said to move a step in the right direction from mainstream discourse approaches, but he still bases his theory on a distinction between two functions of the forms. Sequentiality, for which a better label is succession, is a *function* that some verbal forms have. It is not part of the meaning of the verbal form.

The problem of confusing the function of the forms with their meaning is not limited to the discourse linguistics. It can be found, in fact, among most scholars working on Hebrew verbs. As an example, C. H. J. van der Merwe *et al* (2002:165) says that the *wayyiqtol* “bears reference to the same temporal spheres and aspects as a perfect form but it is also characterized by progression”, and he says the same regarding the relationship between the *weqatal* and the *yiqtol*. John A. Cook rightfully complains (Cook 2002:278): “many biblical scholars are content with identifying *wayyiqtol* as a sequential narrative form without examining a possible *semantic motivation* for its narrative use” (italics mine). Often, the so-called sequential forms in Hebrew have interpretations other than the successive. As we have seen, even Endo acknowledges this fact (Endo 1996:324). Comrie says (Comrie 1985:28):



Grammars of many languages claim that the language in question has a special form for indicating situations that occur in sequence, or for distinguishing sequences of situations from simultaneously occurring situations. However, in nearly every case, it is impossible to tell from the limited range of examples given whether the interpretation of sequentiality is indeed part of the meaning of the form in question, or whether this is just an implicature following from a basically aspectual distinction. This is one of the deficiencies of descriptive work in this domain. More generally, the failure to distinguish between meaning and implicature is one of the main problems in working out an adequate characterization of tenses.

So far, no one has been able to demonstrate that succession is part of the meaning of any of the so-called sequential forms in classical Hebrew.

Later in the same book, Comrie stresses these problems again, and provides a method for their solution (Comrie 1985:61-62):

[The] sequencing of events is a property of narrative itself, quite independent of the verb forms used to encode narrative, so that the mere fact that the verb forms receive this interpretation in narrative is not sufficient evidence for assigning this meaning to those verb forms. Indeed, crucially one would need to look for examples outside of narrative, where the context does not force the immediate succession interpretation, to demonstrate that this is actually part of the meaning of the forms in question.

Comrie's recognition of the problem associated with narrative is an important point, on which this thesis is partly based. Michel, too, denies that there are special verbal forms for narrative, but that it is the context that leads to such an interpretation (Michel 1960:47). The relation between narrative and other text types will be treated in chapter 3.

We have seen that in the study of Hebrew, use or function has often been seen as equivalent to its meaning. In this thesis, too, there is focus on function. Like the adherents to traditional "sentence grammar" and discourse linguistics, I am of the opinion that there is a relation between function and meaning. Even though I maintain that function does not equal meaning, the functions that a form has may reveal something about its meaning, and about the verbal form's relations to the other forms in the language.

#### **2.2.4 The idea that the two forms in Hebrew stand in a polar opposition**

The fourth assumption, which is less often addressed than the latter, is the one regarding the fundamental relation between the two principal forms, the *qatal* and the *yiqtol*. The question is whether the relation between the two forms is based upon a polar opposition or not. The fact that the two forms seem to be counterparts in the system does not necessarily entail that they stand in a polar opposition to each other. Among scholars who have based themselves on this assumption, Michel and Joüon/Muraoka can be mentioned. An example is Michel's dependency theory, which has already been mentioned in 2.1. He reasoned that, because of

his interpretation of the *qatal* as independent, the *yiqtol* must necessarily be dependent. One possible basis for the idea of polar opposition is a confusion of terms. If one form is labelled perfective, the *imperfective* must, by necessity, have exactly the opposite meaning.<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately, many of the current theories regarding the classical Hebrew verbal system are based upon one or more of the assumptions mentioned above. The truth of these assumptions holds the key to what is the main question in the understanding of the Hebrew verbal system: How many finite forms<sup>2</sup> are there? Are there two, three, or four? These and other problems will be addressed in the next chapters.

## **2.3 Aspect: What it is and what it is not**

In 2.2 the importance of distinguishing between semantics and pragmatics and the pitfalls one falls victim to, if this is not observed. If one fails to make that distinction, it results in unfortunate consequences in many areas. This problem is not the only one encountered in the literature on the Hebrew verbal system. Especially within the area of verbal aspect, there is a general confusion of terminology. The confusion with regard to terminology is related to a confusion of concepts. This is very true in the case of verbal aspect in general, and especially in the case of classical Hebrew, as we shall see in 2.3.

### **2.3.1 Aspect and tense**

The difficulties to determine the true nature of the verbal forms have been demonstrated in both this and in the former chapter. Some believe that the system is based on tense, others that it is based on some form of aspect. In 2.2, we saw that many scholars have difficulties in distinguishing the concept of tense and the temporal reference of a situation. The temporal reference of a situation is the time sphere that a situation has in relation to the time in which the speaker makes the statement about the situation. Whether it is true to say that the relation is expressed by a tense, on the other hand, depends on whether it is the verbal form itself that signals the time relation or not. The definition and understanding of the concept of aspect is not any simpler. While tense is defined as the grammaticalized expression of location on the timeline, and is therefore deictic, aspect is non-deictic. This means that verbal forms that express aspect, *do not* relate the time of a situation to the time of a vantage point. Comrie defines aspect as “*different ways of viewing the internal temporal constituency of a situation*” (Comrie 1976:3, italics mine). Pronounced in a different way, aspects are “subjective

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<sup>1</sup> Scholars who speak against a polar opposition include Waltke and O'Connor (1990:476) and Endo (1996:49).

<sup>2</sup> The imperative excluded

viewpoints” (Bybee 1985:142). In many cases it is thus possible for the speaker or writer to choose one form to another without a significant change in the meaning in what is being said.

In the first chapter, we saw a number of approaches to tense and aspect. Some, such as Birkeland, meant that Hebrew has both tense forms and aspectual forms. Joüon/Muraoka sees the forms sometimes as tenses, sometimes as aspects. Some follow an aspectual approach, and yet others maintain that their distinction of the forms is one of aspects, but, as we shall see, there may be problems with this characterization in many cases. For instance, van der Merwe *et al*, even though they claim not to follow any particular theory in their grammar, still use what I would call the “pseudo-aspectual” characterizations *completed* and *incomplete* to describe the *qatal* and the *yiqtol*. This idea, which originated with S. R. Driver, has become a common description of the forms. In applying these designations, it seems, one has tried to explain the use of the verbal forms in Hebrew: e.g., the *qatal* is most often used for past time, which most often entails completion. On the other hand, all *qatals* do not refer to past situations, and in these cases, a past tense seems out of place. By using the term “completed”, one also leads the thoughts to “perfected”. In other words, the situation is viewed as a whole. It seems, then, that these labels find themselves somewhere between tense and aspect. This middle ground situation is probably why this idea became so pervasive. The label “completed”, though, inevitably leads towards a tense view. Then we may ask the question, to what extent does the label “completed” successfully describe a future situation? In what way can it be seen as completed? No one, to my knowledge, has been able to give an answer which is satisfactory.

Some have tried to lead the discussion into an issue regarding the world-view of the ancient Israelites. A. F. Rainey argues against the completed - incomplete theory in such a way (Rainey 1990:408-409):

Our acceptance of the term ‘imperfect’ should in no way be construed as acquiescence to the common view that the ancient Semitic verbal systems were based on the expression of ‘aspect’ rather than tense. The ancient Semites knew when to sow their fields and to milk their cows; their own language was quite adequate to explain these things to their sons. The idea that the Semites only viewed verbal action as completed or incomplete is a European conceit. It has no basis in fact.

His arguments are based upon a misunderstanding. No one among those who have an aspectual interpretation of the Hebrew verbal forms, or others, would suggest that the ancient Semites did not have a concept of time. The question is of course whether in classical Hebrew deictic time is grammaticalized or not. There are plenty of examples that show that the Israelites knew very well the difference between past, present and future. If they didn’t, then

how are the words שלשום, אתמול, היום, מחר and מחרת to be explained? Comrie writes that the Cameroonian language Bamileke-Dschang has a symmetrical (past-future) five-way tense distinction. Thus, there is e.g., one tense for immediate past, one tense for “earlier today”, one for “yesterday”, one for “the day before yesterday or a few days earlier” and finally one tense for “around one year ago or more”. Similarly, five tenses can be found for future (Comrie 1985:97). Even though English does not have such an impressive set of tenses, it obviously does not mean that an English speaking person does not have any way of understanding the difference between the concepts “two minutes ago” and “two years ago”. Again, this is an example of the neglect of the semantic meaning on one side, and on the other, the interpretation a lexical item has based on the interpretation drawn from the context (cf. 2.3).

A different variant of the completed versus incomplete theory is the one that distinguishes between *complete* versus *incomplete*, and as such, it is free from the notion of deictic time. If the *qatal* is seen as complete, it means that the situation is viewed as a whole, but without the connotations to tense, as with the “completed” label. The opposition between complete and incomplete is in any case too vague and elusive for an attempt to be made to test this view. More importantly, the complete - incomplete view seems to lack any foundation in the data. Paul Hopper says regarding its background (Hopper 1979:58):

The perfective aspect is found mainly in kinetic, sequential events which are central to the unfolding of the narrative. The beginning of one event is contingent upon the completion of the preceding event, and it is from this contingency that the notion of completeness which is characteristic of perfective aspect derives—the idea of the action viewed ‘as a whole’.

It is not impossible that Hopper is right, but there is an explanation that seems more plausible, and which will be presented below.

Regardless of either of these two concepts, the one of completedness and the one of completeness, they give rise to a great deal of confusion in terms of the lack of distinction between aspect and tense. This can be seen in a quote from Y. Endo (Endo 1996:64):

Though one cannot be sure at the moment which category [i.e., tense or aspect] presupposes the existence of the other, there may not be much difference between the temporal opposition past vs. non-past and the aspectual opposition complete vs. incomplete (or non-complete) in describing the conjugations

Cook (Cook 2002:156) comments on Endo’s aspect view: “the problematic status of his ‘aspectual’ opposition and its correlation with tense effectively reduces his tense-aspect parameter to tense alone”. Van der Merwe says something similar to Endo’s statement (van

der Merwe, *et al* 2002:144): “It is not clear whether in BH it is time that assumes aspect, or aspect that assumes time”. On the same page, he says that the perfect correlates more or less to past time, which corresponds to completed action. Likewise, the imperfect corresponds more or less to non-past time, which corresponds to non-complete action. Cook’s judgement regarding Endo’s confused view can safely be extended to van der Merwe’s also.

What, then, is the correct description of the value of the *qatal*? Does it view a situation as having a marked beginning, as according to Birkeland? Does it focus on the end, as S. R. Driver meant? Is it a combination of the two, i.e., a view of the situation as complete or as a whole? Alternatively, does the *qatal* merely state the existence of the situation?

The imperfective focuses on the internal phases of a situation, whereas the perfective aspect does not. The “complete” view of the *qatal* seems to have arisen as an opposition to the “incomplete” view of the *yiqtol*. The *yiqtol* represents the imperfective aspect, and therefore focuses on the internal phases of the situation. That does not mean that the *qatal*, its counterpart, must necessarily have as its intrinsic meaning to portray situations as complete or as a whole. This would assume that the difference in meaning between the *qatal* and the *yiqtol* is based on a polar opposition, and there is no reason why we should take such an assumption as self-evident. Rather than accepting Hopper’s explanation, I take this common assumption as a more plausible explanation for the view that the *qatal*, or indeed, the perfective of other languages, has commonly been associated with a view of a situation as “complete”.

### 2.3.2 Aktionsart

Aspect has been explained as a subjective view of the “internal temporal constituency” of a situation, and it is also known as “grammatical aspect”. This stands in opposition to the concept of *Aktionsart*, or “lexical aspect”, which can be defined as the “nature of that constituency” (Olsen 1997:25). Since *Aktionsart* is an objective category, verbs can be classified into different classes, according to their internal temporal constituency. The different kinds of verbs were classified by Zeno Vendler, who called them “species of verbs” (Vendler 1957:146). The classes are often referred to as the Vendlerian categories. These are states, activities, accomplishments and achievements. Vendler made a model for *Aktionsart*, with a description of three oppositions, one positive and one negative. Mari Broman Olsen took Vendler’s categories as a point of departure when she introduced a *privative* view of these oppositions. By the term “privative” is meant that the three oppositions have one marked member, the other member being unmarked for the particular value. The three values are *dynamicity*, *durativity* and *telicity*. Dynamicity tells whether the situation is stative (e.g.,

“to be”) or dynamic/fientive (e.g., “to become”), durativity pertains to its duration (whether it last for a period of time, short or long, or only exists for a moment). Telicity is whether the verb has an inherent endpoint. Thus we get six features, which are: +dynamic, stative, +durative, punctiliar, +telic, atelic. The marked features (+) are semantic while the unmarked are not. The unmarked members are pragmatic, whose interpretation is dependent on the context. This is not true of the marked features, whose interpretation is an inherent property of the verb and cannot be canceled by any circumstances (Olsen 1997:33). Based on these oppositions, we get at least five different categories with the following features, as seen in table 1 from Olsen (Olsen 1997:26-27):

Table 1. Verb classes based on Aktionsart

<u>Aspectual Class</u>	<u>Telic</u>	<u>Dynamic</u>	<u>Durative</u>	<u>Examples</u>
State			+	<i>know, be, have</i>
Activity		+	+	<i>run, paint, sing</i>
Accomplishment	+	+	+	<i>destroy, create</i>
Achievement	+	+		<i>notice, win</i>
Semelfactive		+		<i>wink, tap, cough</i>

### 2.3.2.1. Dynamicity

The verbal roots הלך, רוע, אכל, ירד, כתב, צחק, חלף, הרג and חשב are all marked for dynamicity. In other words, they do always have a dynamic interpretation. The roots היה, חיה, ישב, קום, עמד and שכב are not marked for this feature, and their interpretation in terms of dynamicity depends on e.g., the context and on *binyan*. The verb היה may be stative, as in “to be”, or it may be dynamic, as in “to become”. In cases such as the latter the situation involves a change of state, hence it is dynamic. The verb ישב may have the stative interpretation “to sit”, or a dynamic one, “to sit down”. חיה is most often stative in *qal*, in *piel* on the other hand, it is dynamic. Gen 3.1 has הָיָה הַחֹמֶת מְכֹלֵת הַשָּׂדֶה “And the snake *was* more crafty than any other animal of the field...”. Here the verb היה is stative, but in 3.22 it is dynamic: הָיָה הָאָדָם כְּאֶחָד מֵאֵלֵינוּ לְדַעַת טוֹב וָרָע “Look, Man *has become* like one of us, knowing good and bad”. Likewise, in Gen 28:11 the verb שכב is dynamic:

וישכב במקום ההוא "...and he *lay down* in that place". Two verses later, in 28.13 it is stative: הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה שֹׁכֵב עָלֶיהָ לְךָ אֶחָנָה וְלִזְרֻעָךְ "the land on which you *are lying* I will give to you and your offspring".

#### 2.3.2.2. Durativity

The roots הלך, רוע, אכל, ירד, כתב, צחק and חשב are all marked for durativity, they must, by necessity, have some duration, whether long or short. The verb מות is telic but unmarked for durativity, and is most often punctiliar. In Gen 35.18 it is durative:

וַיְהִי בְצֵאת נַפְשָׁהּ כִּי מָתָה וַתִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ בֶּן-אוֹנִי "And as her soul went out – for she *was dying* – she called him Ben-Oni."

#### 2.3.2.3. Telicity

The verbs מוצא, שים, שית, יצג, נצב and נשג are all marked for telicity. As we have seen, the verbs הלך, רוע, אכל, ירד, כתב, צחק and חשב are all marked for dynamicity and durativity, but they do not have telicity as a semantic property. They can be made telic through clause constituents, though. In Gen 24.16 we find a *wayyiqtol* of the aforementioned root ירד,

וַתֵּרֶד הָעֵינָה וַתִּמְלֵא כֶּדָּה וַתַּעַל: "And she *went down* to the spring and filled her jar, and then she went up". Because the movement down to the spring in this case has an end (the stop at the spring), the clause with the *wayyiqtol* is telic, even though telicity is not an inherent

(semantic) property of the verb itself. The telicity of the predicate, therefore, is a pragmatic property caused by the nature of the clause. In Gen 28.12 we have

וַיַּחְלֶם וְהִנֵּה סֹלֶם מֻצָּב אֶרֶצָה וְרֹאשׁוֹ מֵגִיעַ הַשָּׁמַיְמָה וְהִנֵּה מַלְאכֵי אֱלֹהִים עֲלִים וְיֹרְדִים בּוֹ:

"And he had a dream, and behold: A ladder was set on the ground, and its top reached into the sky, and angels of God *were going up and down* on it". Here the verb ירד is atelic, because there is no end to the going up and down on the ladder.

### 2.3.3 The confusion of aspect and Aktionsart

The concepts of aspect and Aktionsart, as well as their respective terminology, are often confounded in the literature. Joüon/Muraoka explain aspect as whether an action is represented, on the one side as single or punctual, or on the other side as repeated or extended over time. About what is now called Aktionsart, they say: "Some verbs have in themselves the instantaneous aspect or the durative aspect" (Joüon/Muraoka 1996:355). They do not keep these two concepts apart, and, consequently they do understand neither the concept of aspect

nor the concept of Aktionsart. They are thus left with the misconception that single or instantaneous situations are properly expressed by the perfective aspect, while repeated or extended situations are properly expressed by the imperfective aspect. Anything else, according to them, is a violation against the system. As an example, they view the use of the *wayyiqtol* for frequentative situations in the past as “irregular and improper” (Joüon/Muraoka 1996:393). This is not what we see in the text of the Hebrew Bible. The *qatal*, *wayyiqtol*, *weqatal* and *yiqtol* may all refer to situations that are of either short or long duration, or that are single or repeated.

The analysis in 5.3 shows that telic events with present reference are more often found in the perfective *qatal* than in other forms. This relation has misled some to believe that the two concepts are one and the same. P. M. Bertinetto (Bertinetto 2001) has labeled this the Perfective=Telic Confusion (PTC) (cf. 5.3). David Moomo has written an article arguing that the *weqatal* is imperfective. In it he says that the perfective “is used to express a view of an event or state as a complete whole, *having* a beginning and an end point” (Moomo 2005:90, italics mine). Is the motivation for the use of the perfective that such situations *have* an end point, according to him, or is it in order to *focus* on the end point? The latter seems more probable, but later he says that it is not common in aspectual languages to find cases where *the perfective form is used to express an imperfective meaning*, and vice versa (Moomo 2005:91). This is a good example of the confusion between the subjective view that aspects represent and the features of a clause pertaining to its Aktionsart.

## 2.4 My view on the HVS: An aspect system

As discussed in 2.2, some assumptions on which many theories of the HVS are based cannot be accepted. Based on my analysis I reject the view that the classical Hebrew verbal forms express tense. I will argue that the meaning of the finite forms is based on *aspect*. Some aspect theories were criticized in 2.2, in particular the complete(d) – incomplete view. This distinction does not define the two Hebrew forms *qatal* and *yiqtol*, because the *qatal* does not focus on the end or the completion of the situation it portrays. The definition of the *yiqtol*, according to this view, is based on its opposition to the notion of completion of the *qatal*. Thus, if the *qatal* does not focus on completion, the view that the *yiqtol* portrays the situation as incomplete is without foundation. Comrie views the perfective as portraying a situation as a single whole, where there is not necessarily more focus on one part of a situation than on



other parts (Comrie 1976:18). He also says (Comrie 1976:21): “perfectivity involves lack of explicit reference to the internal temporal constituency of a situation”.

The labels that I employ for the aspects are the *perfective* and the *imperfective*. My definition of the former does not imply a focus on completion/end of a situation, nor on any other part of it. I would even go a step further than Comrie. The best way to describe the perfective aspect, at least in the case of classical Hebrew, is by the term *constative*: The *qatal* does not focus on the end of the situation; it states the occurrence of the situation. The internal structure of the situation is not in focus, neither is its beginning nor its end. When a *qatal* is used, the writer does not wish to focus on both the beginning *and* the end of the situation at the same time, s/he merely wishes to state the existence of it. It is true that the perfective aspect, *qatal*, includes both the beginning and the end of the situation. Comrie’s description of viewing it as a whole, however, entails a view on the *imperfective* as a view “not as a whole”. These definitions are not accurate, and should be avoided altogether.

While the perfective does not refer to the internal structure of a situation, the imperfective does make reference to the internal structure of the situation it portrays (Comrie 1976:24). The Hebrew imperfective cannot be defined in exactly the same way as Comrie defines the imperfective aspect. The *yiqtol* does not have as its aspectual value to refer solely to a point after the situation’s beginning but after its end. The *yiqtol* may certainly refer to such a point, but this is not its only point of referral. It can be defined as *focusing on a point in the situation*, which may be *at its inception* or after its beginning but before its end. As a matter of fact, it may even be just before its inception, in which case the *yiqtol* is *conative*, expressing attempt. The conative idea is related to another category, which is often treated as separate from its aspectual value, namely the category of modality. In 5.2.1 the connection between the imperfective and the modal will be demonstrated.

The perfective or constative aspect, since it merely states the occurrence of the situation and does not make reference to the internal structure of it, can be said to be the less specific of the aspects. The imperfective, as a consequence, is more specific. In the rest of this thesis, the terms “perfective” and “constative” may both be used. My definition of the *qatal* as including both the beginning and the end entails the constative idea. Each of the two terms will be used as it seems appropriate in the particular contexts.

In addition to these two finite forms, there is another form that must be mentioned. I take the participle to be imperfective, as I do the *yiqtol*. Nevertheless, the aspectual values of the two forms differ. While the *yiqtol* may focus on the point of the situation’s inception or even on a point external to the situation itself (conative), the participle focuses on a point after

the beginning but before the end of the situation. In other words, its definition is closer to the one of the imperfective aspect of many other languages, and as presented by Comrie (Comrie 1976:24).

Each of the forms with *waw*, in my view, has the same meaning as the form without *waw*. The apparent difference in meaning between them is the result of a superficial interpretation of their functions. The uses of the forms with *waw* are therefore motivated by the same meanings that the forms have when they do not have prefixed *waw*. The use of the *wayyiqtol* in temporally successive situations is not, as often claimed, due to its perfective meaning. Rather, this use is related to the inceptive value of the imperfective aspect, *(way)iqtol*. The use of the *weqatal* in logically successive situations is motivated by the constative nature of the perfective aspect value of the *(we)qatal*. In logical succession, the temporal succession often involved is secondary. The focus, therefore, is not on a temporally subsequent event, and the inception of the latter, as a consequence, is not in focus. That is why the imperfective *(way)iqtol* is not used in such cases. It is rather the mere occurrence of the logically successive situation that is important; hence the constative/perfective aspect is used. Since temporal succession is a typical trait of past narratives, the *wayyiqtol* most often has past reference. The opposite is true of logical succession, which often occurs with future situations. The participle, even though imperfective, does not have inception as part of its range of focal points. When it has prefixed *waw*, it is employed for neither logical nor temporal succession; it usually has coordination as its function.

In the following chapters it will be demonstrated that Hebrew is an aspect language rather than a tense language. It will further be shown that the commonly held dichotomy between *qatal/wayyiqtol* and *iqtol/weqatal* is based upon misguided interpretations of the use of the forms. The true meaning of the forms is closely related to the number of verbal forms, that there are two and not four.

## 2.5 Summary

The chapter begins with an overview of the development of the theories regarding the HVS from the earliest times until the present (2.1). Then the problems involved with these theories were described in 2.2, and a number of assumptions forming the basis for many of them were identified. The assumptions criticized here are that Hebrew verbal forms must be tenses, that narrative is the best text type to use in the study of the HVS, that function equals meaning, and that the relation between the two forms is a polar opposition. Arguments against these

assumptions were then presented, followed by a theoretical discussion in 2.3 of terms and concepts related to e.g., tense, aspect and Aktionsart. Many of these terms and concepts are often confounded in the literature, and this confusion prevents an understanding of the Hebrew verbal system. In 2.4 my own theory was presented, one that is based on aspect.

### 3 The text

The following chapter will touch upon many different subjects pertaining to the study of language in the form of text, some theoretical, others methodological in nature.

#### 3.1 The text types

I will now move on to a subject different to the ones already discussed, although not something altogether different. The following discussion of textual types is related to the one in 2.2.2 regarding the assumption that narrative is the best type of text to study in order to find the meaning of the verbal forms.

##### 3.1.1 About the textual types

Within discourse approaches, one divides narrative text into different text types, like foreground versus background or narrative versus direct speech and so forth. Discourse linguists differentiate these text types in order to find the meaning of the verbal forms. While this method has been shown to be mistaken, it is obvious that the text in the Hebrew Bible can be divided into different types. The division of the text may be done in different ways, according to its purpose. As for my text corpus, I recognize the following four text types: Narrative, prophecy, poetry and direct speech.

Narrative is a prose genre in which historical or past events are retold in the temporal order that they took place in the real world (Comrie 1985:28), the so-called *ordo naturalis*. The retold story, therefore, has a structure consisting largely of temporally successive events with past reference. This structure constitutes the *backbone* or mainline of the narrative, also labeled foreground. Supplemental material and comments given by the author can be called the subsidiary line or background.

I define the prototypical *direct speech* as a quotation of something said by a participant in a dialogue. I say “prototypical”, because what someone says does not need to be part of a dialogue proper between two or more people. It may be merely a comment made, and for which there is no response. It should still be defined as direct speech.

Direct speech can be found in most genres of the Bible. It can be found in narrative texts, in prophetic texts and in poetry. Thus, an example of direct speech can be seen in Gen 1.3 (direct speech in italics): “God said, ‘*Let there be light*’; and there was light”.

The monologues held by a prophet in the prophetic books have similarities with direct speech, but for the same reason, I label this kind of monologue *prophetic speech*. The same is

valid for monologues that God holds, reported by the prophet in the prophetic books. These may be introduced by e.g., 'כֹּה אָמַר ה' or ended with 'נֹאֵם ה'. Gary A. Rendsburg makes the same distinction between dialogue and e.g., prophetic speech (Rendsburg 1990:159).

In order to distinguish in poetry between what is direct speech and what is not, I use the term *poetic speech* for the part of poetic texts that is not direct speech. Psalm 64.6: "They encourage each other in evil plans; when they talk about hiding traps, they say, '*Who will see them?*'" The words in italics is direct speech, the rest of the quotation given here I label poetic speech.

In this thesis I am trying to find out in what way the different verbal forms are used, in order to find their semantic meaning, which is the motivation for such use. It has been claimed that narrative is the most suitable text type for such a purpose, and that e.g., poetry should be avoided. This view has been put forth based on the apparent regularity in temporal reference that can be found in the verbal forms in narrative texts. Poetry, on the other hand, has been viewed as an area in which chaos reigns, and there is no regularity in the application of verb forms (Joüon/Muraoka 1996:353). The orderly structuring of narrative does make it seem like a suitable place for study. However, this orderly character has been shown to become a pitfall for those investigating it. The structures made up by sequences of temporally successive events allow, by definition, very little room for interpretation in the first place. Some has recognized this important point, however. As we saw in 2.2.3, Comrie has warned against the use of narrative to find the meaning of verbal forms. Within the field of Hebrew studies, there are also some who have noted this point. Diethelm Michel deliberately chose the Book of Psalms as his corpus in his 1960 study of the Hebrew verb, because of the limitations in terms of the imbalance of temporal references in narrative texts. Poetry, Michel pointed out, have all three temporal spheres represented: Past, present and future (Michel 1960:13).

As we see, there are certain differences between some of the text types, which can be easily distinguished. In this study, I have, as already mentioned, divided the corpus into several text types: Narrative, prophetic speech, poetic speech and direct speech. The latter has been subdivided further: I distinguish between direct speech in narrative, direct speech in prophetic texts, and in direct speech in poetry (Psalms). The prophetic books, moreover, consist of both prophetic speech and also of narrative, in addition to direct speech. Consequently, I even distinguish between direct speech found in contexts of prophetic speech and direct speech found in narrative contexts in prophetic texts. This division gives us seven text types, but direct speech in narrative contexts in the prophetic books could probably be

merged with direct speech in narrative contexts in e.g., Genesis and 1, 2 Samuel. In the analysis, however, it is retained as a separate text type. This study was at first not meant to include 2 Samuel, but because of some interesting features, the direct speech of 2 Samuel was nevertheless included. Because, in addition to this division, each biblical book is treated separately, we get eleven text types to work with in the analysis in chapter 4. These are:

Genesis:	Narrative, direct speech
1 Samuel:	Narrative, direct speech
2 Samuel:	Direct speech
The twelve minor prophets:	Narrative, prophetic speech, direct speech in narrative contexts, direct speech in prophetic speech contexts
Psalms:	Poetic speech, direct speech

This subtle division is made in order to find any potential differences or similarities between the texts. The problem with a too crude distinction is that, if there are differences between two text types that are not distinguished in the analysis, these differences will remain undetected. The six *basic* text types that I distinguish are seen in table 2, below.

Table 2: The text types

<b>Historical narrative</b> (e.g., Genesis, 1, 2 Samuel, book of Jonah)	<b>Narrative text type</b>
	<b>Direct Speech</b>
<b>Prophecies</b> (The twelve minor Prophets)	<b>Prophetic Speech</b>
	<b>Direct Speech</b>
<b>Poetry</b> (Book of Psalms)	<b>Poetic Speech</b>
	<b>Direct Speech</b>

### 3.1.2 A new approach: The advantages of studying direct speech

My own analysis in chapter 4 has led me to conclude that narrative should be treated with caution in the study of the meaning of the verbal forms in classical Hebrew. The arguments of Comrie (2.2.3) and Michel (3.1.1, 2.2.3) support this. Michel, as a result of the same insight, chose poetry as corpus in his study. Poetry has a more balanced distribution of the temporal spheres in the verbs and is not bound by the strict structure of temporal succession. Despite these advantages, questions can still be asked regarding how suited it is as corpus for

investigating the meaning of the verbal forms. The lack of a rigid structure of temporal succession, in addition to its advantages, also has a disadvantage. A narrative structure, by default, follows the *ordo naturalis*, i.e., the events are narrated in the same order as the actual real-world events. The order can be changed only if the context makes it possible (Levitt 1981:93). In other words, there is seldom any doubt as to the temporal reference of a verb. In poetry, on the other hand, there are often few clues to the temporal reference of the verbs. In addition, poetry as text type is generally difficult in terms of temporal reference. If we want to search for the meaning of the verbal forms, poetry is therefore problematic. Even though the language of poetry is not subject to the structure of retelling events in the order they occurred, as is the language of narrative, it is subject to its own patterns. The structure of poetry involves several different patterns, such as metre, parallelism, wordplay, sound patterns and word pairs. The way in which these techniques work in classical Hebrew are not always agreed upon among scholars, such as the question of metre. Some even claim that in Hebrew poetry no such thing as metre exists (Watson 1994:49). Then there is the construction of word pairs, where two verbs of the same root but with different form create sort of a formal opposition in a verse. The variants of this construction is, e.g., *qatal // yiqtol*, *yiqtol // qatal*, *wayyiqtol // (we)qatal* and *qatal // wayyiqtol*. Despite the difference in form, the interpretation of the two verbs is seemingly identical in terms of temporal reference and in every other respect (Held 1962:282). If the choice of verbal form are based purely on the basis of stylistic criteria in such cases, then to what degree is the choice of form affected by other structures, such as metre, word play or sound patterns? The difference between prose and poetry is that in poetry, rhythmic units are being superimposed upon the sentence (Fraser 1970:2). The combination of such superimposed structures upon the language with the aspectual forms being subjective viewpoints makes a quest for the aspectual meaning in each instance of a verb in poetry a daring task, to say the least.

Direct speech is a text type that does not have an *inherent* structure of temporal succession. Neither is it subject to other structural patterns like the ones found in poetry. In addition, it is also unproblematic with regard to temporal reference. Like in poetry, we find in direct speech all three temporal spheres with a fairly balanced distribution, as opposed to in narrative. Modality, which is not very common in narrative, is also abundant. Since it is, by default, free from such restrictions superimposed on its structure, it is my view that direct speech is a more neutral form of expression than other text types.

## 3.2 Direct Speech

In 3.2 the concept of direct speech will be treated, seen from a number of different angles. The questions discussed are such as what direct speech is, how it is identified and what has been done in the study of it.

### 3.2.1 Reported speech

Reported speech is a peculiar phenomenon. It is so because in reported speech, one speech act reports another speech act (Miller 1994a:156).

The category of reported speech can be subcategorized into two main types, direct speech and indirect speech. An occurrence of direct speech could be “He said ‘I will go’”. The indirect speech counterpart would be e.g., ‘He said that he would go’. Reported speech consists of two components: the *frame* and the quotation, or *original locution*. In these sentences, “he said” is the *frame*. “I will go” is the quotation or (original) locution.

There are several differences between direct and indirect speech. The most important, which has many implications, is that direct speech directly reports the original locution, the actual words as they are supposed to be said. This means, of course, that direct speech may contain exclamations, words of address (“dear X”, etc.), and fragmented sentences, which is not possible in indirect speech. The reason this is not possible is that indirect speech is syntactically subordinate to the frame. In direct speech, on the other hand, the locution is independent of the frame (Miller 1994b:201).

Further, direct speech retains its deictic centre, while in indirect speech the deictic centre is moved from the character in the original locution to the deictic centre of the speaker who reports the speech (Miller 1994b:200). The original locution is therefore open to interpretation, which yields many different possibilities if one wants to quote someone by using indirect speech. Thus, ‘She said: “You are an idiot!”’, if converted to indirect speech, we get ‘She said that he’s an idiot’, or perhaps ‘She said that I’m an idiot’, or ‘She said that you’re an idiot’. With indirect speech, the “speech act and its content are only reported, not reproduced” (Banfield 1973:17). Because of the need to interpret what was being said, it is often impossible to find back to the original locution.

Since indirect speech is subordinate to the frame, the frame must precede the quotation. Direct speech, because it is independent of the frame, is more flexible and may precede the locution, it may be preceded by it, or the frame may be placed inside the quotation, with the locution beginning before and continuing after the frame.



Direct speech is independent of the frame, and not dependent on it. Therefore one quotation of direct speech may be embedded within another quotation of direct speech, in up to several layers. Indirect speech may also be embedded in a direct speech quotation, but not the other way around.

Galia Hatav identifies a third type of reported speech in the Hebrew Bible, which she labels “free direct discourse”. Free direct discourse resembles direct speech, but its function is different. It is used if the speaker’s intention is not to give an exact reproduction of what was being said, but rather wants to convey the meaning of the locution, or in order to explain the underlying motives for a character’s actions (Hatav 2000). Free direct speech is introduced by the infinitive construct, **לֵאמֹר**.

### **3.2.2 Direct speech in texts**

Direct speech in the Bible is a quotation of a biblical character’s utterance, as it is reproduced in writing in the biblical text. Some could be lead to believe, then, that the language that we find in direct speech in the Bible is an exact reproduction of the actual words that came out of the person’s mouth. The most obvious objection to such an idea would naturally be “how could the authors of the biblical text in every instance know exactly what e.g., Joseph said on a given occasion?” The whole issue this question brings up belongs far outside the scope of the present study. The issue we are dealing with is rather: “To what extent does the language found in direct speech in the Bible reflect the language as it was spoken in biblical times?” This question raises two issues. The first is the difference between spoken and written language in general. The existence of such differences is universally recognized. These differences include the fact that spoken language consists to a high degree of incomplete sentences, coordinates clauses rather than subordinating them, little use of passive verbs, and that in spoken language the information density of that which is being conveyed is lower than in written language (Brown and Yule 1983:15-18). The second issue is the possibility of the existence of a situation known as *diglossia*.

Diglossia describes the co-existence of two variants of a language, one formal, literary variant, and one informal, colloquial variant, used in everyday conversation. An example is Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) versus the various dialects spoken across the Arab world. Gary Rendsburg’s analysis shows that diglossia was present in ancient Israel as well (Rendsburg 1990:161). This type of situation arises because spoken and written language change at different rates. There is in any spoken language a continuous development, which can be traced even within relatively short intervals. The same is not true to the same extent for

written language, which is often established as a standard for writing. Even though the standard is established on the basis of the spoken language at a given point in time, the standard language does not continue from this point in time to evolve the same way that the spoken variety does. When the colloquial has evolved to become too different from the written standard, a reform will be undertaken to “update” the standard language to bring it in line with the spoken language. The result of the process is that the written language, most of the time, finds itself one stage after the spoken version. Rendsburg outlines this course of development based on evidence from Egyptian and Latin (Rendsburg 1990:28).

The Hebrew of the Tanakh shows a high degree of uniformity, considering the time-span during which it was written. This fact alone strongly suggests that the language known as classical Hebrew was not a spoken language, at least not for most of the long period over which the Tanakh was being composed. Not even the developments that we see in LBH can undermine this argument. In other words, if classical Hebrew had been a reflection of the language spoken during its composition, we would have expected a much higher degree of variation between the different parts of the Tanakh. The existence of diglossia in post-biblical times is beyond doubt. For the literary variant of the language the development was as follows: Classical Biblical Hebrew (CBH) developed into Late Biblical Hebrew (LBH), which in turn developed into a form in which the Dead Sea Scrolls were written, Qumran Hebrew (QH). The spoken language of the last centuries B.C.E. was eventually committed to writing probably in the beginning of the first century C.E. (Rendsburg 1990:14). It is known as Mishnaic Hebrew (MH) or Rabbinic Hebrew (RH). It differs significantly from the literary variants in several respects, and the picture emerging is that until MH was established as language of writing, there existed at all times two different variants of the Hebrew language.

With this in mind, we should return to the issue of direct speech in written texts. As mentioned initially, its seemingly oral nature may lead some to think that direct speech in written form is nothing but a verbatim reproduction of the actual utterance of a living person. As a matter of fact, this has been assumed by some (see Rendsburg 1990:19). As Rendsburg points out, this is not the case. In order to demonstrate this, he provides evidence from Arabic. It has been shown that the language of direct speech occurring in the Qur'an is not one of the colloquial dialects of Arabic, rather the direct speech appears in the classical language, as does the rest of the Qur'an (Rendsburg 1990:20). This is, as mentioned above, likely to be true in the case of Hebrew as well. When we add the strong evidence for a situation of diglossia in ancient Hebrew, I find it suitable to let Uziel Mali conclude the discussion of the paragraph: “ענינו אינו בדיבור החי, אלא בדיבור שבספרות” (Mali 1983:2).

### **3.2.3 The study of the Hebrew in direct speech**

Direct speech is found in large quantities throughout the Hebrew Bible. Rendsburg claims that in his corpus, 42.5 % of narrative texts consist of direct speech (Rendsburg 1990:160).

Despite its quantity, relatively few studies have been dedicated to reported speech in the study of classical Hebrew. There are, however, a number of studies that have been carried out, covering different aspects of reported speech in the Hebrew Bible. Each of these studies falls into one or more of roughly three different categories. The first treats the various ways of introducing different types of reported speech in the text (e.g., Miller 1994a, 1994b, 1996; Hataav 2000; Meier 1992). The second category involves studies on language structure, such as word order and differences in the use of e.g., particles and vocabulary in general in reported speech and narrative (e.g., Mali 1983; Radday & Shore 1985; MacDonald 1975). MacDonald's approach differs from Mali's in the sense that he treats direct speech in the Hebrew Bible more or less Israelite Hebrew as it was spoken in biblical times. Mali's conception of conversation in text is, as we have seen, that it is literary conversation, rather than live conversation. His study is concerned with, in addition to word order, how dialogue is presented in the text by the author, as well as the structure of dialogue. The third category is concerned with colloquialisms and conversational formulas, as represented in direct speech in text. An example of the latter is Irene Lande's 1949 work. Of the former, G. R. Driver can be mentioned. He suggests that many obscure passages and passages often thought to contain errors may in fact be colloquialisms (Driver 1970:239).

### **3.2.4 Introducing direct speech in the Hebrew Bible**

Direct speech can be identified in the text in different ways. Vocatives, imperatives and cohortatives are not found in narrative, but in direct speech. These are internal identifiers or markers of direct speech, i.e. they are found within direct speech itself, as well as being a part of it. More common are external identifiers, pointing to the direct speech from outside the quotation (Meier 1992:1-2). These are markers deliberately placed by the writer reporting the quoted speech. The modern convention is marking direct speech using quotation marks. This method eliminates any ambiguity regarding where the quotation begins and ends. Quotation marks, however, was "a luxury not available to early Hebrew scribes" (Meier 1992:2). In classical Hebrew, direct speech is usually introduced by a quotative frame. The frame usually consists, primarily, of the verb "to say" in one or another form. There are three different types of frames that can be used, depending on its purpose (Miller 1996:146). The first type of

frame is the one with a single, finite verb, the single verb frame. Usually a frame of this type is found in the *wayyiqtol* form, e.g., Gen 1.3 וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי אוֹר וַיְהִי-אוֹר

The second type is a frame that contains two or more finite verbs, which are coordinated. This is the multiple verb frame. One of the verbs is, again, the verb **אמר**, the other is another so-called *metapragmatic verb* (Miller 1996:51). Miller uses this term for verbs that convey the speaker's intention with the reported speech event, such as giving an order, asking a question, praying, calling, swearing, blessing, etc. Examples of such metapragmatic verbs are, in addition to **אמר**; **ענה**, **צוה**, **שאל**, **קרא**, **שבוע**, **פלל**, **ברך** and **וישאל**. Examples of frames with a second metapragmatic verbs are: 1 Sam 19.22 וַיֹּאמֶר וַיִּשְׁאַל, Gen 27.42 וַיֹּאמֶר עֹד דָּוִד וַיֹּאמֶר בְּנֵה הַקֶּטֶן וְהָאֹמֶר וְהַקָּרָא לְיַעֲקֹב, 1 Sam 20.3 וַיֹּאמֶר וַיִּשְׁבַּע עֹד דָּוִד וַיֹּאמֶר, 2 Sam 14.22 וַיֹּאמֶר וַיִּבְרַךְ אֶת-הַמֶּלֶךְ.

The third type is a frame consisting of a metapragmatic verb and the verb **אמר** in the infinitive construct (**לאמר**), such as in 2 Sam 20.18 וַתֹּאמֶר לְאֹמֶר, 2 Sam 17.16 לְדָוִד לְאֹמֶר (with imperative).

The first type of frame with only a finite form of the verb **אמר** is the construction that is least specific. The second type is more specific, since its verb contains a more specific metapragmatic function than only **אמר** (Miller 1994b:217). The third type, the **לאמר** frame, is according to Miller used for non-prototypical dialogue, such as participants in dialogue that are not specified (Miller 1994b:225). She supports this by noting that exclamation marks are never used with this frame type (Miller 1996:197). Miller's non-prototypical dialogue corresponds to Hataav's free direct discourse (3.2.1). In the present study, reported speech introduced by **לאמר** is treated as if it was no different from direct speech. The reason is, obviously, that in this study we are dealing with direct speech as text type, not with conversational analysis as such. Indirect speech, on the other hand, is integrated into its frame by subordination. Therefore it is treated as part of narrative.

### 3.3 Discourse functions

In the analysis, I identify certain functions that a clause or sentence may have in the text. These functions are identifiable with the relationship between clauses or sentences, such as simultaneity, coordination and logical and temporal succession.

### 3.3.1 Temporal relationships

#### 3.3.1.1 Non-successive situations (ns)

Non-successive situations are here explained as being independent of other situations. Such situations are not portrayed as following another, neither logically nor temporally. The first verb in the Hebrew Bible is an example, Gen 1.1 **בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ** “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth”. The verb **ברא** does not depend on any other situation, neither is it portrayed as being a result of another. Likewise, in Ps 87.5 we have the verb **ילד** in direct speech: **וְלִצִּיּוֹן יֹאמַר אִישׁ וְאִישׁ יִלְדָּבָהּ וְהוּא יְכֻנָּנָהּ עָלֶיהָ** “And of Zion it shall be said, ‘This man and that was born here’, for the Most High shall establish her”.

#### 3.3.1.2 Simultaneity

2 Sam 12.21 **וַיֹּאמְרוּ עֲבָדָיו אֵלָיו מַה־הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתָהּ בְּעַבְדְּךָ הַיָּלֵד חַי צִמְתָּ וַתִּבְכֶּה** “And his servants said to him ‘What is this thing that you did? You fasted *and wept* for the boy when he was alive...’”. The *wayyiqtol* **ותבך** is simultaneous with the *qatal* **צממת**.

#### 3.3.1.3 Intersection

Gen 29.9 **עוֹדְנֵנוּ מִדְּבַר עַמָּם וְרַחֵל בָּאָה עִם־הַצֹּאן אֲשֶׁר לְאָבִיהָ** “While he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep”. One situation holds when a second event occurs. The former, **עוֹדְנֵנוּ מִדְּבַר** functions as a background for the latter, **וְרַחֵל בָּאָה**.

#### 3.3.1.4 Temporal coordination

Gen 17.17 has **וַיִּפֹּל אַבְרָהָם עַל־פָּנָיו וַיִּצְחַק** “And Abraham fell on his face and laughed”. The falling and laughing are coordinated events, not merely simultaneous. In Gen 24.54 we have **וַיֹּאכְלוּ וַיִּשְׁתּוּ הוּא וְהָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר־עִמּוֹ** “And they ate and drank, he and the men with him...”. The eating and drinking did not happen successively, the two situations held at the same time and were coordinated.

#### 3.3.1.5 Temporal succession

Gen 40.11 is an example of a series of temporally successive situations in direct speech:

**וְכֹס פַּרְעֹה בְּיָדִי וְאָקַח אֶת־הָעִנְבִּים וְאֶשְׁחַט אֹתָם אֶל־כּוֹס פַּרְעֹה וְאָתַן אֶת־הַכּוֹס עַל־כַּף פַּרְעֹה:**

“And Pharaoh’s cup was in my hand, and I took the grapes and pressed them in Pharaoh’s cup, and then I gave the cup in Pharaoh’s hand”.

In direct speech in Jo 1.12 a *weyiqtol* is used for something as rare as temporal succession in the future: “וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם שְׂאוּנִי וְהִטִּילְנִי אֶל-הַיָּם וַיִּשְׁתַּק הַיָּם מִעֲלֵיכֶם” “And I said to them ‘Lift me up and throw me into the sea, then the sea will calm down for you’”.

### 3.3.2 Logical relationships

#### 3.3.2.1 Final clauses (FC)

A final clause (FC) is defined as a clause of purpose, “in order that”, and is often introduced by *למען* or *בעבור*. In 1 Sam 31.4 we have a negative final clause introduced by *פן*:

וַיֹּאמֶר שָׂאוּל לְנִשְׂא כִלְיוֹ שֶׁלֹּף חֶרֶבְךָ וְדַקְרַנִּי כִּי פֶן-יָבוֹאוּ הָעֲרָלִים הָאֵלֶּה וְדַקְרַנִּי וְהִתְעַלְלוּ-בִּי

“And Saul said to his arms-bearer, ‘Draw your sword and pierce me with it, so that those uncircumcised ones may not come and pierce me and treat me ruthlessly’”

#### 3.3.2.2 Result clauses (RC)

The result clause must not be confused with the final clause. While the final clause expresses purpose “in order that”, the result clause expresses a result of the type “so that”. Gen 27.12: “אולי ימשני אבי והייתי בעיניו כמתעתע והבאתי עלי קללה ולא ברכה: Maybe my father will feel me. Then I will seem to him to be mocking him, and then I will bring a curse on myself, and not a blessing”. There are possibly two result clauses here, the one introduced by *והייתי*, the other by *והבאתי*.

#### 3.3.2.3 Conditional sentences

A conditional sentence consists of a *protasis* and an *apodosis*. 1 Sam 12.25 has *ואם-הָרַע* *וְתָרַעו גַּם-אַתֶּם גַּם-מֶלֶכְכֶּם תִּסָּפוּ* “And if you continue to do evil (protasis), then both you and your king shall be swept away (apodosis)”.

#### 3.3.2.4 Clauses expressing a general logical relationship

In Gen 28.3 we have a verb *והיית*, which introduces a clause that may be interpreted as a result clause or a final clause: “וְאֵל שְׁדֵי יִבְרַךְ אֶתְךָ וַיַּפְרֵךְ וַיַּרְבֵּךְ וְהָיִיתָ לְקַתָּל עַמִּים” “And may God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you, *in order that / so that you become* a group of peoples”. The verb in this clause should be interpreted as expressing a less specific logical relation. The same can be said of *וישבו* in Gen 34.23 *וְכָל-בְּהֶמְתָּם וְקִנְיָנָם הֲלוֹא לָנוּ הֵם אֵךְ נִאֲוֹתָה לָהֶם וַיֵּשְׁבוּ אִתָּנוּ* “Will not their cattle and their property and all their animals be ours? Then, let us agree with them, *and they will settle* with us”.

### **3.4 The corpus**

The corpus of narrative books consists of Genesis and 1 Samuel. Direct speech in 2 Samuel has also been included. The narrative of 2 Samuel has been omitted because of the limited time at my disposal. Of the twelve Minor Prophets, those included are the seven prophets Hosea, Amos, Jonah, Micah, Zephaniah, Zechariah and Malachi. Of the book of Psalms those 39 psalms included are Psalms 2, 10, 11, 12, 31, 32, 35, 39, 40, 41, 42, 49, 50, 52, 60, 64, 68, 71, 73, 75, 77, 82, 83, 87, 89, 94, 95, 96, 108, 110, 115, 116, 122, 124, 126, 129, 132, 137 and 140.

The corpus has been selected based mainly on three criteria. The first, in a study of direct speech, is obviously the requirement that each book chosen must have a considerable amount of direct speech. The second criterion is that the earliest and the latest texts in the corpus should not be too far apart in time. The third is that the comparison of different text types requires a wide range of texts from different genres.

#### **3.4.1 The criterion of direct speech**

The seven prophetic books in the corpus do all have at least a certain amount of direct speech. The five remaining prophets Joel, Obadiah, Nahum, Habakkuk and Haggai contain little direct speech. They have therefore been omitted. The psalms included in the corpus have been included for the same reason. The psalms in the corpus constitute one fourth of the 150 psalms in the Hebrew Bible. The remaining three fourths have been omitted for lack of direct speech. Poetry is thus the genre with the lowest density of direct speech in the corpus.

#### **3.4.2 The criterion of temporal proximity (tent.)**

Dating the biblical text is a difficult task. There is no agreement as to how a text can be dated, whether it can be done on the basis of linguistic or other criteria. Because of this, the application of this criterion for choice of corpus has been applied less strictly. Nevertheless, I have tried to base the selection of texts on the more common views regarding the matter. Most of the texts can be categorized as Classical Biblical Hebrew (CBH) (Standard Biblical Hebrew (SBH)). CBH is defined as exilic or pre-exilic, until approximately 500 B.C.E. Late Biblical Hebrew (LBH) is post-exilic, or after 500 B.C.E (Joosten 2005:339). In addition to some of the psalms, the parts belonging to the post-exilic period are Zechariah, Malachi, Jonah and parts of Micah. At least parts of Micah are post-exilic (Rendtorff 1985:229), and so is Jonah (Rendtorff 1985:227). Regarding Zechariah and Malachi, their language, despite

their late date, is closer to CBH than to LBH (Joosten 2005:338; Ehrensverd 2006:178). The reason for nevertheless including Micah and Jonah is that they contain significant amounts of direct speech.

### **3.4.3 The criterion of genre variation**

The starting point for this project was to investigate the claim that narrative is the best place to look for the meaning of the verbal forms, and that poetry should be avoided. I suggest that the use of the verbal forms in direct speech is a better place to conduct such an analysis. In chapter 4 the different text types are compared. The requirement for such a comparison to be useful is that the texts employed are from very different genres. Thus, historical narrative texts, prophetic texts as well as poetry have been selected as corpus. The narrative portions are Genesis and 1 Samuel. The second genre is prophecy. Instead of choosing one of the longer prophetic books, I have chosen, for the sake of variety, several of the twelve minor prophets instead. The book of Jonah is somewhat peculiar in that there is no consensus as to what literary genre it belongs to, whether prose or poetry or something else. Duane L. Christensen takes it as a narrative poem on metre (Christensen 1987:32). In the analysis in chapter 4 each text type (narrative, prophecy, verse or direct speech) of each biblical book is, for the sake of order, treated as a separate text type. Nevertheless, I have chosen to classify as narrative the parts of Jonah that are not direct speech. The third genre, that of poetry, is from the Book of Psalms. The direct speech analyzed in chapter 4 is all the direct speech found in Genesis, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, the seven of the twelve minor prophets, and in the 39 psalms selected.

Certain portions of the text in Genesis, 1 Samuel and 2 Samuel have a different character than the rest of the text in those books. This applies to Jacob's last words to his sons in Gen 49.2-27; Hannah's prayer in 1 Sam 2.1-10; the prophecy against the house of Eli in 2.27-36; David's lament for Saul and Jonathan in 2 Samuel 1.19-27; David's lament for Avner in 3.33-34; and David's song in 22.2-51. The text types in these portions do not belong to the narrative type, and because of their poetic character they do not fit my definition of direct speech. They could have been classified as e.g., poetry, but I have chosen to omit them from the analysis in chapter 4.



### 3.5 Clauses introduced by הנה

Verbs in clauses introduced by the interjection הנה are omitted from the analysis, because it is clear that they need a separate treatment. This applies to clauses introduced by הנה, or its other variants, e.g., והנה, הן, and הא. A preliminary analysis shows that such verbs often have present reference, or that they refer to situations in the near past or the imminent future. The verbal form is the participle more often than not, even in cases where it precedes a finite verbal form, e.g., Gen 48.4 הִנְנִי מְפַרְדֵּי וְהִרְבֵּיתִיךָ וְנִתְתִּיךָ לְקָהָל עַמִּים “Look, I will make you fruitful and I will make you numerous, and I will make of you a group of peoples”. The reason for the preponderance of participles with the הנה is not clear, and the issue needs to be studied separately.

### 3.6 Summary

In 3.1 a classification of text types is made on the basis of e.g., the structural differences between them. The text types are narrative, prophetic speech and poetic speech. Direct speech in each of these text types is a fourth type, with subdivisions for each of the context in which it is found. Direct speech is proposed as a more neutral form of expression, as compared to the other text types. Reported speech and its subgroups are defined in 3.2, including indirect and direct speech. Here, the methods of identifying each of them in the text are also mentioned. The relation of direct speech to spoken language is treated in a discussion on direct speech in texts, which also deals with the possibility of diglossia in classical Hebrew. In 3.3 certain temporal and logical relations between clauses are discussed, such as temporal and logical succession. In 3.4 the corpus is presented, and the reasons for the choice of the particular texts as object for study.

## 4.0 Temporal reference in the text types

This chapter contains a study of temporal reference in verbs in the text types classified in 3.1. There it was proposed that direct speech is a text type that is more neutral than other types in terms of temporal reference and the way in which it is expressed. The study here will investigate this claim.

### 4.1 The problem involved in the study of temporal reference in verbal forms

It is obvious that in classical Hebrew, any verbal form may have almost any temporal reference thinkable. As a consequence, one can hardly argue for the view that it is a tense language. If a form is represented with both past, present and future reference throughout a text, it cannot be argued that the *meaning* of the form is for instance “past tense”. How can it have *past meaning* if it may also refer to present and future events? How can a form named “past tense” be a past tense in a case where the verb clearly refers to a future event? As Waltke and O’Connor states it: “How can forms each of which ‘represent’ all three English major tenses have a primarily temporal value?” (Waltke & O’Connor 1990:460). If the verbal forms do not signal *deictic time*, i.e. tense, then what do they signal?

In a tense language, each verbal form has its own temporal reference or sphere, which is signaled by the use of this particular form. It is expected, then, that in a historical narrative text, mainly retelling events in the past, there would be a preponderance of verbal forms with (inherent) past meaning. On the other hand, one would expect that verbal forms with a (inherent) future meaning would be few in number, if not completely absent, in such texts. This is not the case with the verbal forms in classical Hebrew. Even the verbal forms that were formerly referred to as “future” can be found in narrative texts, narrating past time events. In the tables showing the distribution of temporal references that each form has in a text, it is interesting to notice that these figures are dependent on text type. In other words, they depend on the general distribution of temporal reference in the text type, independently of verbal form. This means that in a text type where the events in the text are chiefly in the past (e.g., narrative), most verbal forms of the language may still be represented, and that they have mainly *past reference*. In a text where the distribution of temporal values is more balanced (e.g., direct speech), the verbal forms have a larger range of different temporal values. The left columns in figure 1 (below) show the relative distribution of the temporal spheres (TRs) past, present and future in the different texts. Each right column shows the

distribution of temporal references found in *qatals* in the same texts. Figure 2 shows the same thing for the *yiqtol*. The absolute numbers for these can be found in tables A8 and A9 in the appendix. It is, as we have seen, of little use to employ the rather arbitrary statistical distributions of the temporal values that each form has in different textual types, in order to argue that a verbal form has a particular temporal meaning. This poses a problem when the objective is, like it is in this thesis, to compare the different text types in terms of the temporal reference of the verbal forms.

In the grammars of dead and of classical languages, the verbal forms are taken as a point of departure. The grammars then explain what temporal references the forms have, or what tenses they represent, when found in texts or literary works. In the teaching of modern languages, the approach is different. Here, one explains how the temporal spheres are expressed by means of the different verbal forms the language possesses. Because of the problems stated above, I believe that to use the temporal reference instead of verbal form as a point of departure is a more sound approach, at least as a starting point. Also, this approach will reveal the linguistic conventions, if any, that govern the use of the verbal forms in the different text types. It seems clear that Hebrew does not have verbal forms expressing tenses. Because of the weaknesses of the former method of taking verbal form as a point of departure, the relation between temporal reference and form should nevertheless be investigated further. In 4.2 the latter method will be employed in order to further elucidate this relation.

## **4.2 The way in which the temporal references are expressed in the different textual types**

The total number of verbs with a particular temporal reference varies greatly between the text types. Narrative is the text type with the highest degree of uniformity in terms of temporal reference. In the present corpus, there are no verbs in narrative with a future reference. The number of verbs with present reference is low, and we are left with a text type that consists largely of verbs with past reference.

In this way, narrative distinguishes itself from all other text types. Poetic and prophetic texts, as well as direct speech shows a much greater variation of temporal references in the verbs. Verbs with past, present and future reference are all found in abundance. The lack of present and future verbs in narrative limits the investigation into the differences between the text types concerning the variations in the expression of the temporal references. If we are to involve narrative texts in the investigation of these differences, there is only one temporal

reference we can use, namely past reference. If we want to look for patterns in the other temporal spheres, we will have to exclude narrative, for lack of data.

The ways in which the verbal forms are employed in order to express the different temporal spheres are in general not fundamentally different between the text types. There are, however, certain variations between them, which appear as more or less consistent patterns. In 3.1.2 some basic similarities between the text types of direct speech, prophetic speech and poetic speech were pointed out, as opposed to historical narrative. Because of these similarities and differences one can anticipate these variations to be visible in the analysis of the use of the verbal forms in the different text types.

#### **4.2.1 Discourse versus narrative**

If we want to include all text types when we look for differences in the way the verbal forms are used, we have to use past as a point of departure. When we investigate the ways in which past ns is expressed, we see a consistent pattern. This pattern is made up by the division of the text types into two groups. The division is between narrative on one side and discourse on the other. Thus, we see that the *qatal* is used more often in DS (past ns is expressed by *qatal* in 83.3-93.3 % of the cases) than in non-DS. Below direct speech we find poetic speech with 82.9 % and in the parts of the twelve minor prophets that constitute prophetic speech the percentage is 70.2 %. Narrative ranges from 43.2 % to 68.6 %.

From the figures above, we can make a two-way division in the way the past ns is expressed by *qatal*: discourse (direct speech, poetic and prophetic speech) (from 70.2 to 93.3 %), and narrative (43.2 to 68.6 %). Thus, discourse to a high degree expresses past ns by using the *qatal*, narrative to a lower degree. Table 3 shows to what degree past ns is expressed by the *qatal*. Since *qatal* is used more to express past ns in discourse and less in narrative, then what forms are used more in narrative than in discourse? The form used is the *active participle* and to some degree a consistent pattern can also be seen for the *wayyiqtol*. The *wayyiqtol* is generally used more often in narrative (5.9 to 29.7 %) than in discourse (0 to 10.1 %) for past ns. The *active participle* expresses past ns more often in narrative (8.6 to 47.1 %) than in discourse (0 to 6.6 %). Tables 4 and 5 show to what extent past ns is expressed by the *wayyiqtol* and the *participle*.

Table 3. *Qatal*, past ns (narrative in *italics*)

Text type	%	Number of <i>qatals</i> and total number of verbs of verbs with past ns reference
Direct speech in Minor Prophets, narrative contexts	95.8	(23 <i>qatals</i> out of 24 verbs)
Direct speech in Psalms	86.7	(13 <i>qatals</i> out of 15 verbs)
Direct speech in Genesis	85.6	(160 <i>qatals</i> out of 187 vbs)
Direct speech in 1 Samuel	83.5	(152 <i>qatals</i> out of 182 vbs)
Direct speech in Minor Prophets, prophetic speech contexts	83.3	(5 <i>qatals</i> out of 6 verbs)
Poetic speech in Psalms	82.9	(63 <i>qatals</i> out of 76 verbs)
Direct speech in 2 Samuel	80.6	(109 <i>qatals</i> out of 135 vbs)
Prophetic speech in Minor Prophets	70.2	(130 <i>qatals</i> out of 185 vbs)
<i>Narrative in Genesis</i>	68.6	(230 <i>qatals</i> out of 336 vbs)
<i>Narrative in Minor Prophets</i>	47.1	(16 <i>qatals</i> out of 34 verbs)
<i>Narrative in 1 Samuel</i>	43.2	(153 <i>qatals</i> out of 354 vbs)

Table 4. *Wayyiqtol*, past ns (narrative in *italics*)

Text type	%	(Number of <i>wayyiqtol</i> s and total number of verbs with past ns reference)
<i>Narrative in 1 Samuel</i>	29.7	(105 <i>wayys</i> out of 354 vbs)
<i>Narrative in Genesis</i>	14.8	(50 <i>wayys</i> out of 336 vbs)
Prophetic speech in Minor Prophets	10.1	(19 <i>wayys</i> out of 185 vbs)
Direct speech in 2 Samuel	8.2	(11 <i>wayys</i> out of 135 verbs)
Direct speech in Psalms	6.7	(1 <i>wayyiqtol</i> out of 15 vbs)
<i>Narrative in Minor Prophets</i>	5.9	(2 <i>wayys</i> out of 34 verbs)
Direct speech in 1 Samuel	4.4	(8 <i>wayys</i> out of 182 verbs)
Direct speech in Genesis	4.3	(8 <i>wayys</i> out of 187 verbs)
Direct speech in Minor Prophets, narrative contexts	4.2	(1 <i>wayyiqtol</i> out of 24 vbs)
Poetic speech in Psalms	2.6	(2 <i>wayys</i> out of 76 verbs)
Direct speech in Minor Prophets, prophetic speech contexts	0	(no <i>wayys</i> among 6 verbs)

Table 5. The participle, past ns (narrative in *italics*)

Text type	%	(Number of participles and total number of verbs with past ns reference)
<i>Narrative in Minor Prophets</i>	47.1	(16 participles out of 34 vbs)
<i>Narrative in 1 Samuel</i>	13.3	(47 participles out of 354 vbs)
<i>Narrative in Genesis</i>	8.6	(29 participles out of 336 vbs)
Direct speech in 1 Samuel	6.6	(12 participles out of 182 vbs)
Direct speech in Genesis	5.2	(10 participles out of 187 vbs)
Direct speech in 2 Samuel	3.7	(5 participles out of 135 vbs)
Prophetic speech in Minor Prophets	2.1	(4 participles out of 185 vbs)
Direct speech in Psalms	0	(no participles among 15 vbs)
Direct speech in Minor Prophets, narrative contexts	0	(no participles among 24 vbs)
Direct speech in Minor Prophets, prophetic speech contexts	0	(no participles among 6 vbs)
Poetic speech in Psalms	0	(no participles among 76 vbs)

As mentioned above, the number of verbs with present reference in narrative texts is very limited, but also from the limited amount of data it is possible to see a pattern. For verbs with present reference, the *qatal* (table 6) is used more often in discourse (25.0 to 49.2 %) than in narrative 0 to 12.5 %). From the data that we have, it may seem that the participle (table 7) generally is used to a greater degree in narrative (50.0 to 62.5 %) than in discourse (0 to 58.3 %). The numbers of verbs that the percentages in tables 6 and 7 are based on are not provided in the table, but it suffices to say that in narrative there are less than ten verbs with present reference in each text. This fact makes tables 6 and 7 less useful for a comparison of the text types where narrative is included.

Table 6. *Qatal*, present (narrative in *italics*)

Text type	%
Direct speech in 2 Samuel	49.2
Direct speech in Minor Prophets, prophetic speech contexts	46.2
Prophetic speech in Minor Prophets	43.9
Direct speech in Genesis	41.6
Poetic speech in Psalms	41.1
Direct speech in Psalms	41.0
Direct speech in 1 Samuel	28.2
Direct speech in Minor Prophets, narrative contexts	25.0
<i>Narrative in Genesis</i>	<i>12.5</i>
<i>Narrative in 1 Samuel</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>Narrative in Minor Prophets</i>	<i>N/A</i>

Table 7. The participle, present (narrative in *italics*)

Text type	%
<i>Narrative in Genesis</i>	<i>62.5</i>
Direct speech in Minor Prophets, narrative contexts	58.3
<i>Narrative in 1 Samuel</i>	<i>50.0</i>
Direct speech in 1 Samuel	37.9
Direct speech in Genesis	33.7
Direct speech in 2 Samuel	27.7
Prophetic speech in Minor Prophets	17.3
Direct speech in Minor Prophets, prophetic speech contexts	15.4
Poetic speech in Psalms	5.2
Direct speech in Psalms	0
<i>Narrative in Minor Prophets</i>	<i>N/A</i>

If we go back to *qatal*s with past ns reference, the percentages in themselves do not form into groups with large gaps between them. The percentages for the different texts are, as seen in table 3: Discourse: 95.8, 86.7, 85.6, 83.5, 83.3, 82.9, 80.6 and 70.2 %, narrative 68.6, 47.1 and 43.2 %. The only thing that can be seen is that discourse is on the top and narrative is definitively at the bottom. The lowest percentage for discourse and the highest of narrative are 70.2 and 68.6 % respectively. Thus, there are no big gaps between the two groups. How many groups of percentages we have is therefore impossible to say in the case of the *qatal*. In the two forms *wayyiqtol* and the participle, there is also a distinction between narrative and discourse.

Thus, when all these data are considered, it is justifiable to pose a two-way distinction. There is not in any case a distinction between direct speech on one hand and poetic and prophetic speech on the other. The distinction is between discourse and narrative, rather than between direct speech, poetic / prophetic speech and narrative.

#### 4.2.2 Poetry

In 5.2.1 it can be seen that discourse forms one group that distinguishes itself from narrative. Because of the low number of present and future verbs in narrative, narrative cannot be part of a comparison of verbs with present or future reference. In such cases, the differences, if any, must be seen within the text group of discourse. In these cases, Psalms is the text on the top or on the bottom of the table, as compared to all other texts. For verbs expressing present reference, most texts display a percentage lower than do Psalms in the use of the *yiqtol* (Psalms 48.1 to 51.3 %, other texts 16.7 to 50.0 %<sup>3</sup>), and the *weyiqtol* (Psalms 1.3 to 5.1 %, other texts 0 %). Regarding the use of the participle, Psalms is the text using the participle to the lowest degree of all the texts for present reference (Psalms 0 to 5.2 %, other texts 15.4 to 62.5 %). Psalms is thus the opposite of narrative, where present reference is expressed by the participle in at least half of all the cases.

Psalms also expresses future ns by the *weqatal* less to a lesser degree than any other text. In Psalms future ns is never expressed by the *weqatal*, while the percentages for the other texts range from 9.1 to 45.4 %.

In general, the percentages for Psalms, although often at the top or the bottom of a table, do not differ from the other texts in a significant way. Psalms never forms a group of its own, and is often rather similar to the percentages for other texts within discourse. Moreover,

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<sup>3</sup> One out of only two verbs

when data for narrative is present, poetry always sides with other discourse texts, against narrative.

The fact that direct speech, prophetic speech and poetic speech form one group against narrative, enables us to modify table 1 from 3.1.1. The new table (table 8) is seen below:

Table 8: The text types modified

<b>Historical narrative</b> (e.g., Genesis, 1, 2 Samuel, book of Jonah)	<b>Narrative text type</b>	<b>Narrative text type</b>
	<b>Direct Speech</b>	<b>Discourse</b>
<b>Prophecies</b> (Minor Prophets)	<b>Prophetic Speech</b>	
	<b>Direct Speech</b>	
<b>Poetry</b> (Book of Psalms)	<b>Poetic Speech</b>	
	<b>Direct Speech</b>	

### 4.3 What is the more neutral form of expression?

My working hypothesis is that *direct speech* is a more neutral form of expression than other text types, especially if compared to narrative.

As we have seen, there is no significant difference between direct speech, poetry and prophetic texts in the way that the different verbal forms are used. On the other hand, there is a difference between these text types on one hand and narrative on the other. When two as apparently different text types as poetry and direct speech found in narrative contexts show such similarity, there is reason to believe that the terms “unbound” or “neutral” fit these text types better than for the narrative text type, which distinguishes itself from the others. As a consequence, it is safe to say that the analysis of this chapter supports the working hypothesis.

It is common opinion that poetry should be avoided in the study of the Hebrew verbal system. It is said that in poetry the verbs behave in a “haphazard way”, and that narrative is a better text type to use, since the verbs there allegedly behave in a more predictable way, so that their meaning can be seen more clearly (e.g., Joüon/Muraoka 1996:353). The analysis shows that the claim is unjustified. By and large the use of the verbal forms in poetry is within the range of discourse in general. It therefore resembles prophetic speech, and, more



interestingly, direct speech. Thus, if poetry is to be avoided in the study of the classical Hebrew verbal system, then direct speech, also when found in narrative texts, must share the same fate. Contrary to common opinion, it is narrative texts that should be treated with caution in the study of the Hebrew verbal forms, rather than poetry.

Despite this, direct speech is chosen for the object of the analysis in the following chapter. The reasons for this are mentioned in 3.1.2. Another reason is the difficulty in determining temporal reference in verbs in poetry and prophetic texts. Temporal reference in direct speech, on the contrary, can, in the vast majority of cases, be determined with reasonable certainty.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

The conclusion from 4.3 was that the relation between temporal reference and verbal form is different in narrative and in discourse. The analysis of this chapter has shown, on the other hand, that all verbal forms are used with verbs of all temporal spheres. Based on this finding we can reiterate the findings from 4.1 (as shown in figures 1 and 2), namely that classical Hebrew does not have tenses.

If Hebrew does not have tenses, then in what way is an investigation into temporal reference of the forms relevant? The answer to that question lies in the relation between the meaning of the forms and their functions, which are motivated by their meaning. The functions of a form in turn have an indirect relation to the temporal reference of those verbs. This relation will be further dealt with in chapter 5.

When it has now been established that classical Hebrew does not have tenses, an alternative theory will be presented in chapter 5, namely the view that Hebrew is an aspect language.

Figure 1. The relative distribution of the temporal spheres in the different texts (*qatal*)

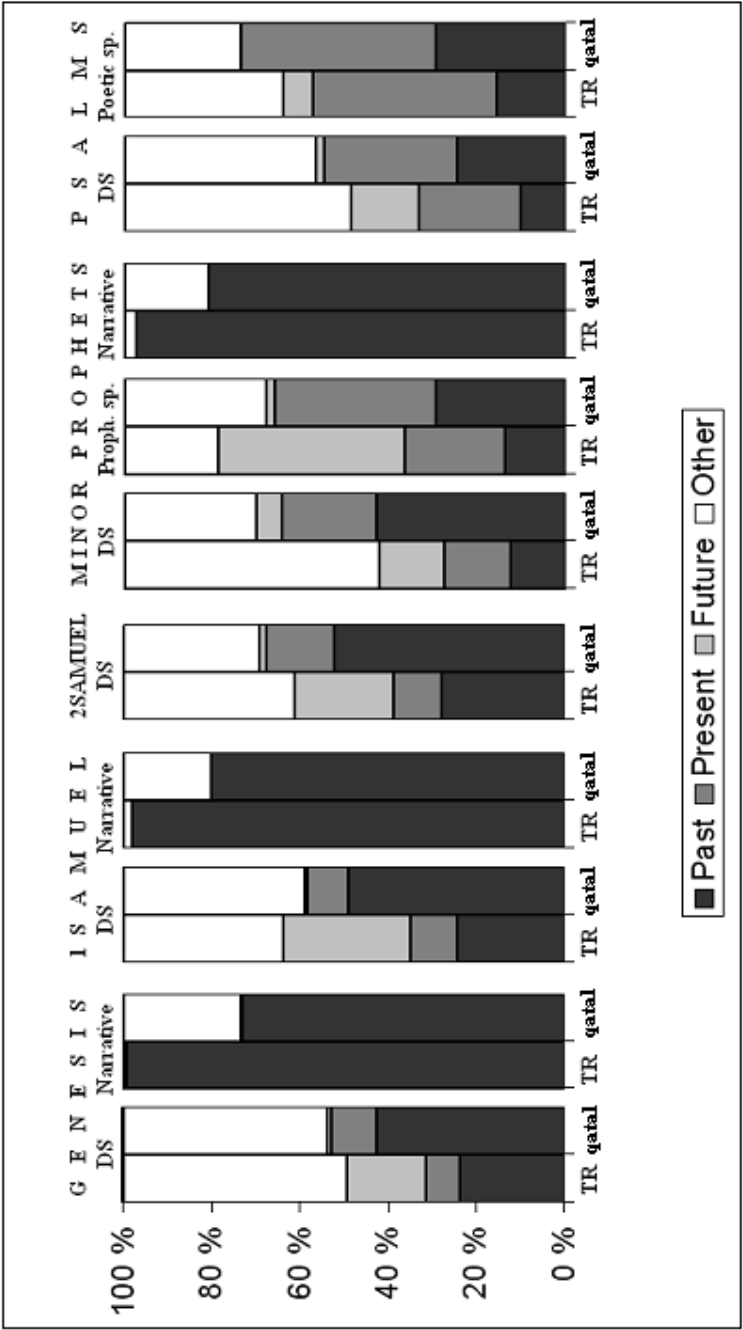
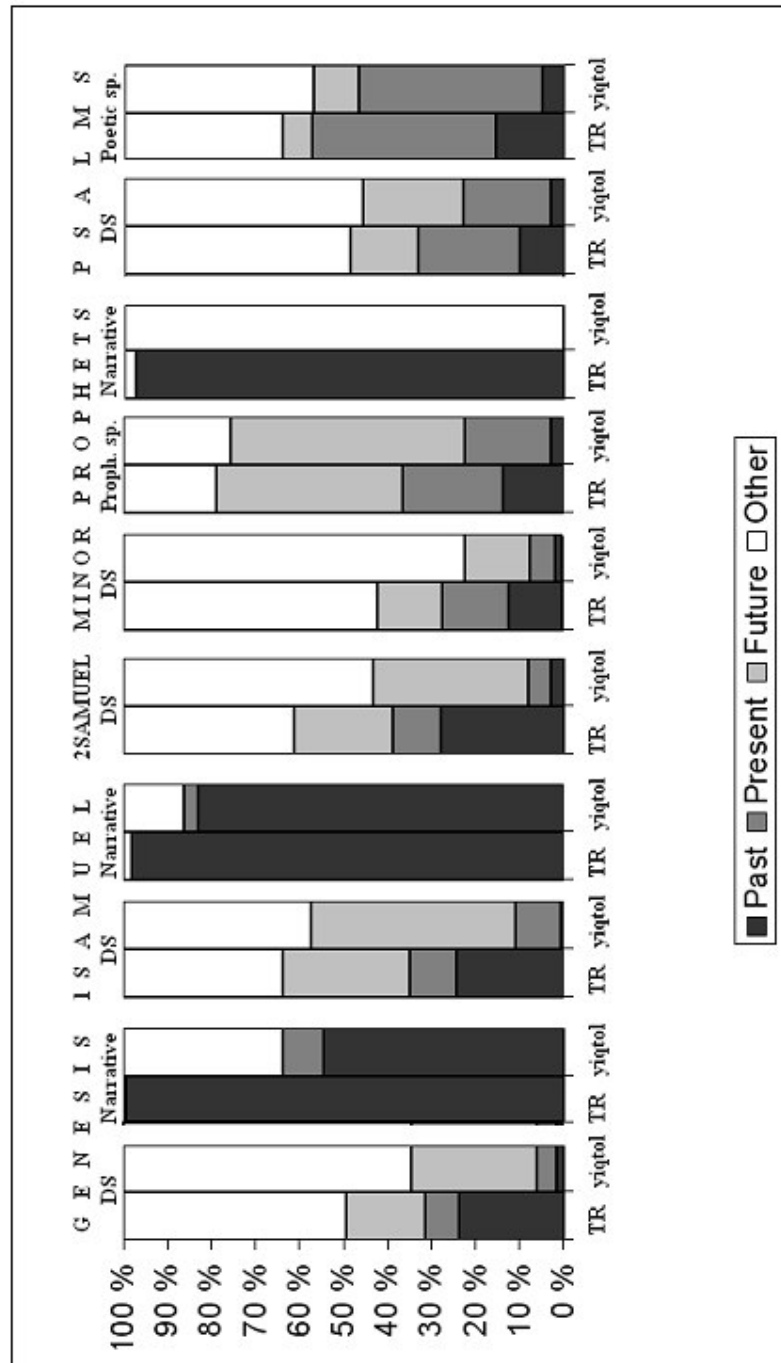


Figure 2. The relative distribution of the temporal spheres in the different texts (*yiqtol*)



## 5.0 Analysis of the verbs in Direct Speech

The traditional views of the HVS are, as we have seen, largely based on the temporal reference that the verbal forms have in the Hebrew Bible. The traditional approach has been to take each verbal form as a point of departure, and to investigate the temporal references that each of them have in the corpus chosen. Such corpora have often been historical narrative, and in the former chapter the problems associated with this approach were pointed out. Since the distribution of temporal references in the verbs depends on the nature of the text type in the corpus, it was concluded that a comparison between the text types is useless if each verbal form is taken as a point of departure. Instead, each temporal sphere must be focused upon.

### 5.1 How are the different temporal spheres expressed in direct speech?

Since each verbal form may be used to express almost any temporal reference, and each temporal reference may be expressed by almost any verbal form, it is difficult to argue that classical Hebrew has a tense system. And since a simple analysis of temporal reference alone apparently leads us nowhere in determining the value of the forms, we must find other means of doing so.

In this chapter, I attempt to show that the superficial similarities between *yiqtol* and *weqatal* and between *qatal* and *wayyiqtol* do not necessarily mean that they have same meaning, since, as my analysis shows, there are an often greater degree of similarity between e.g., the *wayyiqtol* and *yiqtol*, than between *wayyiqtol* and *qatal*.

In what way may the functions of the verbal forms reveal the true meaning of the forms? Use or function is not the same as (semantic) meaning, and function may also not say a lot regarding the meaning of a verbal form. However, if we can establish consistent patterns in the similarities and differences in the way the forms are used, we may begin to ask what the reasons are for these differences and similarities.

One important way in which aspect differs from tense is that the aspects are subjective viewpoints (Comrie 1976:3, Bybee 1985:142). The writer may in most cases choose between the forms when describing a particular situation, sometimes even with no significant change in the conveyed meaning. Thus, in order to find the true meaning of the verbal forms, one has to find those cases where the writer has no alternatives in the choice of form.

## 5.2 The verbal forms

The rather fundamental question regarding the number of finite forms has been mentioned in chapter 2 and 4. The question of number of forms is closely related to the question regarding their meaning. If any one of these are answered, we will have come a lot nearer the answer to the other. The results of the following analysis will provide an answer to both questions.

### 5.2.1 The *yiqtol*: The imperfective aspect

I view the *yiqtol* form as representing the imperfective aspect. The imperfective aspect portrays a small portion of the situation, e.g., the *inceptive*, or expressing the situation as *continous* or habitative/frequentative. If it is inceptive, it portrays the beginning of the situation, if continous it portrays a small part of the situation, after the beginning but before the end of the situation. The inceptive value of the imperfective is the basis of S. R. Driver's definition of the *yiqtol* (Driver 1998:71-72):

The imperfect represents action as *nascent*: accordingly, when combined with a conjunction connecting the event introduced by it with a point already reached by the narrative, it represents it as the *continuation* or *development* of the past which came before it. וַיֹּאמֶר is thus properly not *and he said*, but *and he proceeded-to-say*. (Italics his)

Waltke and O'Connor also recognize the inceptive value of the *yiqtol* (Waltke & O'Connor 1990:503).

The *yiqtol* may also express a conative idea (attempt). In other cases the *yiqtol* may have a modal interpretation. If a *yiqtol* is used with past reference the writer wants to express a more specific trait to the situation than if the temporal reference was present or future (e.g., it may be conative, inceptive or habitual, etc.). This shows that there is a special relation between the imperfective and future reference, which in turn is related to modality. The latter relation has been pointed out by John Lyons (Lyons 1977:677). In my view the modal meaning of the *yiqtol* is not a meaning separate from its imperfective aspect, rather there is a connection between the two.

The connection between the different ideas of the Hebrew imperfective aspect and modality can be seen in the following:

Epistemic modality	can do (involves possibility or uncertainty)
deontic modality	can do, want to do (involves will)
conative	tries to do
inceptive	begins to do

continous	is doing
frequentative	does repeatedly
habitulative	uses to do

A connection between modality and the habituitive is maintained by several. F. R. Palmer states that the modals *could*, *will*, and *would* may be used in English to express “iterative” or habituitive action (Palmer 1979:80-81, 111, 129, respectively). G. Hatav has found a connection between modality and habituitivity in classical Hebrew (Hatav 2006:31) and Joosten has treated the connection between modality and iterativity (Joosten 1992:7).

#### 5.2.1.1 Modal *yiqtol*s

In Genesis Gen 43.7 the two verbs נָדַע and יֹאמַר have past modal interpretation:

הִנְדוּעַ נָדַע כִּי יֹאמַר הוֹרִידוּ אֶת־אֲחֵיכֶם

“Could we know that he would say ‘bring down your brother’?”

The verb יִמְנָה in Gen 13.16

אִם־יִוָּכַל אִישׁ לִמְנוֹת אֶת־עֵפֶר הָאָרֶץ גַּם־זֶרַעַי יִמְנָה

“...then also your offspring can be counted”, אָרַע in 15.8

“how can I know that I shall inherit it?” בָּמָה אָרַע כִּי אִירָשָׁנָה

and יִסְפָּר in Gen 16.10 מִרְבַּּ מְרֹב וְלֹא יִסְפָּר מִרְבַּּ “...that it cannot be counted for multitude.”

#### 5.2.1.2 Conative *yiqtol*s

P.P. Saydon claims that the *yiqtol* in Gen 3.15 תִּשְׁפָּגְנִי עֵקֶב is to be interpreted as conative: “he will attack you in the head, and you will try to attack him in the heel” (Saydon 1962:126).

#### 5.2.1.3 Inceptive *yiqtol*s

An example of an inceptive *yiqtol* is יִיטֵב in Gen 40.14

כִּי אִם־זִכְרֹתַי אֲחִידָה בְּאֲשֶׁר יִיטֵב לִי “But remember me when he begins to do good to you”.

In Jo 2.4 there is a *yiqtol* and a *qatal*,

וְנָהָר יִסְבְּבֵנִי בַל־מִשְׁבְּרֵיךָ וְגִלְיָד עָלַי עָבְרוּ “The floods were around me and your waves passed over me”. The *yiqtol* is best interpreted as inceptive, when the contrast with the *qatal* is considered. The second verb does not indicate any temporal advancement relative to the first verb; they are to be taken as simultaneous. Therefore the second verb does not express

anything in particular, except the constative. Hence, the form *qatal* is chosen. Alternatively, the first verb could be interpreted as progressive or habitative. In that case it would be difficult to explain the *qatal*, unless the difference in form between the two verbs is an expression of the freedom on part of the writer.

The *yiqtol* in Gen 27.40,

וְהָיָה כִּשְׁמֹרֶתְךָ “And it will happen when you break loose...”

is also a possible example of inceptive *yiqtol*.

The conjunction and adverb טָרָם (ב), “before” or “not yet”, is most often followed by a *yiqtol*. This problem has been solved in different ways among scholars. Most argue that the *yiqtol* used in these circumstances is the short form of the prefix conjugation, having preterit meaning. Hataav suggests a different explanation. The traditional explanation, she says, “seems to be empirically invalid” (Hataav 2006:25). She analyzes it as being a modal particle compatible with the modal value of the *yiqtol* (Hataav 2006:42). I offer a third explanation, in which the meaning of the word טָרָם goes fine with the presented view of the inceptive aspect of the *yiqtol*. The reason why the *yiqtol* is used, even for past events, can be seen most easily in the two *yiqtol*s preceded by טָרָם in Gen 2.5

וְכָל שִׁיחַ הַשָּׂדֶה טָרָם יִהְיֶה בָאָרֶץ וְכָל-עֵשֶׂב הַשָּׂדֶה טָרָם יִצְמַח

“...and no plant of the field had yet come into existence in the earth, and no herb of the field had yet (began) to spring”.

The general circumstance when טָרָם is used is that while one situation holds, a second situation has not yet began to happen. In the direct speech of the present corpus, there are two examples of the use of this conjunction. The verbs in these examples are both telic, at least one of them must be seen as punctual, and as such it is slightly more difficult to grasp the connection to the inceptive idea of the imperfective. In Gen 24.45

אֲנִי טָרָם אֲכַלָּה לְדַבֵּר “I, before I had finished speaking...” the *yiqtol* is punctual and telic. The point in time to which the preposition טָרָם refers is the end point of the situation expressed by the infinitive, which is modified by the *yiqtol*.

Gen 27.33 has

וְאֶכֶל מְכֹל בְּטָרָם הָבוֹא “And I ate from it all before you came”, also a telic situation. It may also be interpreted as being punctual, the conjunction, then, refers to the point on the timeline before Esau’s arrival.

When the *yiqtol* expresses the inceptive, it does not mean that the focus on inception is so strong that it should always be expressed e.g. in a translation into another language. The

reason is obviously that while Hebrew has a verbal form expressing this aspectual value, most languages do not.

#### 5.2.1.4 Continuous, frequentative and habitative *yiqtol*s

The two past *yiqtol*s in Gen 31.39 אָנֹכִי אֶחָפְנָה מִיָּדְךָ תִּבְקָשָׁנָה “I bore the loss, from my hand did you demand it” are telic, and the reason why they are used in this particular passage may be that they are to be taken as habitative. This is of course difficult to test, and the reasoning may be said to be circular, but this interpretation is the most plausible, the context considered. The same can be said of the verb in Ho 6.1, יָךְ. Judging from the context, this apocopated *yiqtol* is most likely habitative or frequentative.

A clause resembling the one in Jo 2.4 is found two verses later, in Jo 2.6. Here we have the same two verbal forms, but in reverse order,

אֶפְפֹּנִי מִיָּם עַד נֶפֶשׁ הַהוּם יִסְבְּבֵנִי “The water surrounded me...the deep was around me”.

Here the *yiqtol* is the second verb (cf. the *qatal* in Ps 18.6), and it seems unlikely that it is to be taken as inceptive; the only plausible possibility is that is progressive. Ps 68.15 has

בְּפֶרֶשׁ שָׂדֵי מַלְכִּים בָּהּ תִּשְׁלַג בַּעֲלָמוֹן

“When the Almighty was scattering kings there, snow was falling on Zalmon”,

this passage is also best interpreted as being habitative.

#### 5.2.1.5 *Yiqtol*s with more than one interpretation

In Gen 31.8 אִם־כֵּן יֹאמַר “If he said thus...” (twice), the *yiqtol* appears for no obvious reason.

One may argue that the *yiqtol* is used because it appears in the protasis of a conditional clause, which often has a *yiqtol*. However, situations in conditional clauses most often occur in the future (36 times out of 53, i.e., 68 %), of which twenty out of thirty-six (56 %) are expressed by the *yiqtol*. This is probably the reason for the use of the *yiqtol* in such clauses. One could argue, on the other hand, that the use of *yiqtol* in the protasis of conditional clauses with temporal references other than future is a convention with its basis in the use of the *yiqtol* in these clauses with future reference.

### 5.2.2 The *qatal*: The perfective aspect

I take *qatal* to represent the perfective aspect. This aspect is not a perfective aspect in the sense known from the common description of the perfective aspect, where the focus is on the completion of the situation. The Hebrew perfective aspect can best be described as a



constative aspect. Expressing a situation in the constative means that the internal structure of the situation is not focused upon, rather than the more common view that the situation is viewed as a whole. The verb in the constative states the fact that the situation occurs. When the constative aspect does not reveal the internal structure of the situation, it may be fair to say that the perfective aspect is the less specific of the forms. Because of this, the perfective aspect is more difficult to test on the basis of data, as opposed to the more specific imperfective. Thus, in an analysis of the perfective, it ought to be contrasted with the imperfective in order that its true meaning can be revealed.

There is evidently a connection between past reference and perfective aspect, as we have seen. The correlation between past reference and the perfective is more than a statistical issue, as is the correlation between the imperfective and present-future reference: reference, but here picture is far from clear. The fact, though, that the *qatal* seems to be the “default” form for situations with past reference shows that there is a special relationship between the perfective aspect and past temporal reference (Dahl 1985:79). In later Hebrew, as in many languages, this relationship over time becomes strengthened and even develops into a grammaticalization process. It can also be seen in most other Semitic languages, where the verbal forms express tense rather than aspect.

Perfective verbs do not always have past reference, however. A great many *qatals* have present reference, especially stative and also telic verbs. There are a few cases in the corpus in which the *qatal* is used with verbs with future reference. The most obvious examples are in Gen 30.13, 43.9, 43.14 (twice), and Ps 10.11. Gen 30.13 בָּנוֹת כִּי אֲשֶׁרוּנִי “Women will deem me happy” If the *qatal* denotes complete, or worse, completed action, in what way does it make sense to say that the situation in this verse is completed? It is located in the future, and it can thus hardly be completed. If it is seen as complete, what does this mean? The clause in 43.9 אִם-לֹא הֵבִיאָתִי אֵלָיךְ “If I do not bring him back to you” is paralleled with Gen 42.37 and 44.32, in which a *yiqtol* is used in both verses. There is no apparent difference in meaning between the verses with *qatal* and *yiqtol*. All three verbs are part of the protasis of a conditional clause, where they are all clause-initial. The passage in 43.14 with the verb occurring twice, וְאֲנִי כְּאִשֶּׁר שָׂכַלְתִּי שָׂכַלְתִּי “If I am to be bereaved, I shall be bereaved” is not easily interpreted, because the relationship between the two *qatals* is not clear. The only thing that seems clear is that the verbs express future situations. A *qatal* is also found in Ps 10.11 בִּלְרָאָה לֹנֶצֶחַ “He will never see”. In all these examples the verbs are clause-initial. Further, it is interesting to note that all the *qatals* with future reference are

either stative or telic (cf. the relationship between Aktionsart and form in verbs with present reference, section 5.3), with the possible exception of the verb ראה in Ps 10.11. Comrie treats the question on dynamicity versus stativity in verbs of perception crosslinguistically. He says that different languages are “free to choose” whether such verbs are to be classified as stative or dynamic (Comrie 1976:35). It seems that in Hebrew, these verbs have more in common with dynamic verbs than with statives.

#### 5.2.2.1 Performative action

In a typical situation with present reference, the event time (ET) begins before and extends to after the deictic centre (C). Thus, the deictic point intersects the situation, and for atelic situations, one of the imperfective forms is used, while the perfective is used for telic and stative situations.

In performative actions, the situation begins at the moment of the utterance, and thus the situation is not intersected by the deictic point, the present moment. This seems to be the explanation why the constative aspect is used for these situations.

#### 5.2.2.2 Ingressive *qatal*

The *yiqtol* may have an inceptive value, as we have seen. The inceptive is, as we have seen, a semantic property of the imperfective aspect of the *yiqtol*. More commonly referred in the literature is the ingressive *qatal*. The difference between the *qatal* and the *yiqtol* in this respect is that the ingressive *qatal* is only found with stative verbs, that is, the entrance into a state. This problem was treated in 2.3.2.1, under the heading of Aktionsart. Here an example from Gen 3.22 was quoted: וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים הֵן הָאָדָם הָיָה כְּאַחַד מִמֶּנּוּ “And God said ‘Look, Man *has become* like one of us...’”. Another example is in 2 Sam 16.8: הָשִׁיב עָלַי יְהוָה כֹּל דַּמִּי בֵּית-שָׂאוּל אֲשֶׁר מָלַכְתָּ תַּחְתּוֹ “God has returned upon you all the blood of the house of Saul because *you took* the throne instead of him”. In 1 Sam 9.5 we find a *weqatal*: לָכֵן וְנָשׁוּבָה פְּנֵי-יִחְדָּל אָבִי מִן-הָאֲתָנֹת וְרָאנִי לָנוּ [worrying] about the donkeys and *begin worrying* about us”. As shown in 2.3.2.1 stativity is not a semantic property of a verb. Rather, such verbs are unmarked for dynamicity and they may thus be stative or dynamic. The entering into a state (the ingressive) is a dynamic change of state, while the resulting situation is stative. We can conclude, then, that the ingressive interpretation of the *qatal* is caused by the unmarkedness for dynamicity in these verbs, and that it is not a semantic property of the form *qatal* itself.

### 5.2.3 Is the *qatal* or the *yiqtol* similar to the *wayyiqtol*?

The *wayyiqtol* is said by most scholars to be either perfective or a past tense, or both. It is regarded as an equivalent to the *qatal* used mostly in narrative texts, and with an added idea of progression (van der Merwe 2002:165).

The following analysis will show that the *wayyiqtol* is neither a past tense nor perfective. As for the *yiqtol*, the different ideas of the imperfective aspect can be seen in the *wayyiqtol*.

#### 5.2.3.1 Modal *wayyiqtol*s

The *wayyiqtol* וַאֲשַׁלְחֶה in Gen 31.27 makes a final clause “so that I could have sent you away...”, a sense elsewhere expressed by the *(we)yiqtol*. *Qatals* and *weqatals* are never used in final clauses, at least not in the present corpus. Another modal *wayyiqtol* וַחֲשֵׂא can be seen in Ps 50.16.

#### 5.2.3.2 Conative *wayyiqtol*s

I have found no examples in direct speech of *wayyiqtol*s expressing the idea of attempt. A few examples can be found in narrative. P.P. Saydon (1962:125-26) puts forth five examples: וַיִּצְלְהוּ “and he tried to save him” in Gen 37.21, וַיִּצֵּר “he tried to lay siege to it” in 1 Ki 20.1, וַיִּנָּס “and he tried to escape” in 2 Ki 9.23, וַיִּצֵּא “and [Jeremiah] tried to leave” in Jer 37.12, but the verb וַיִּבֶן “he attempted to build” in 2 Chr 14.5 seems dubious. Also Jo 1.13 וַיִּחָדְדוּ “[the men] tried to row” can be mentioned.

#### 5.2.3.3 Inceptive *wayyiqtol*s

When we move from the conative to the inceptive idea, we move from the parts of an event not temporally part of the event, to the part of the event itself. If a wish or an attempt has been made, the event has not really occurred. The inceptive idea entails that the event has at least begun. In other words, the event has occurred, if only a small part. In most cases where a verb can be said to be inceptive, it is possible to interpret the situation as simply taking place, without recourse to the rather peculiar and specific inceptive aspectual value. In order to show that the inceptive idea is in fact part of the definition of the Hebrew imperfective aspect, we have to find examples of the *(way)yiqtol* where the event was clearly not completed. Such examples are not found in direct speech in the corpus, but there is an example of it in the narrative of Gen 8.1, analysed by Furuli as an ingressive *wayyiqtol* (Furuli 2005:314). The context of the phrase וַיִּשְׁכַּח הַמַּיִם, often translated as “the water subsided”, shows that the

waters did not subside at this point in the story, because the text tells us that the water kept subsiding for several months. Rather, the verb must be inceptive, “and the water began to subside”.

In most other cases of an inceptive verb, the context does not show clearly if the situation must be inceptive or not. On the other hand, it has been demonstrated that this is part of the meaning of the imperfective aspect of Hebrew, and with this in mind the inceptive interpretation of the verb can be seen in many other cases as well.

In Gen 3.13 הִנָּחַשׁ הַשֵּׁאֲנִי וָאֵכָל “the snake tricked me, and I ate”, the constative *qatal* states the fact, and the inceptive *wayyiqtol* expresses temporal succession.

The two forms are found in reverse order in e.g. Jo 2.8

בְּהִתְעַטֵּף עָלַי נַפְשִׁי אֶת־יְהוָה זָכַרְתִּי וַתָּבוֹא אֵלַי תְּפִלָּתִי

“When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord, and my prayer came to you”

The situation expressed by the *qatal* is simultaneous with the one expressed by the preceding infinitive, and the following *wayyiqtol* follows the *qatal* temporally, and so the inceptive imperfective is used.

The two verbs in Gen 1.5 וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים לְאוֹר יוֹם וּלְחֹשֶׁךְ קֶרָא לַיְלָה

“And God called the light day, and the darkness he called night”

are used by Waltke and O'Connor to show that the *qatal* and the *wayyiqtol* have identical meaning (1990:546). Here we have, however, a fine example of the contrast in meaning between the two aspects. Cook gives a similar example from Gen 4.3-4

וַיָּבֵא קַיִן מִפְּרִי הָאֲדָמָה מִנְחָה לַיהוָה וְהָבֵל הֵבִיא גַם־הוּא מִבְּכֹרוֹת צֹאנוֹ

“Cain brought the fruit of the ground as an offering to the Lord, and Abel also brought the firstborn of his sheep”, where he suggests that the contrast from *wayyiqtol* to *qatal* is meant to express that the *wayyiqtol* is not temporally successive (Cook 2004:263-4). In other words, the *wayyiqtol* receives its interpretation by being contrasted with the *qatal*. The reason is probably his view of the interplay between the different parts of discourse (Cook 2004:255-6):

“In Gestalt theory, the figure is the pattern that is most visually perceptible, whereas the ground is the area surrounding and delimiting the figure. The relationship between figure and ground is described as one of dependency: the figure depends upon the ground to give it its perceived shape.”

This may be true, but in this case it is to draw things too far. Each form may easily be explained in its own right. Cook correctly observes that the *qatal* may be used to avoid a

temporally successive interpretation when a departure from the sequence of verbs in temporal succession is needed. On the other hand he is wrong when he implies that it is the *qatal* that gives the *wayyiqtol* this interpretation.

Thus, in Gen 1.5 the *wayyiqtol* is part of a narrative sequence, expressing temporal succession from the former verb, making use of the inceptive aspect. The verb following is a *qatal*, expressing the perfective aspect. The narrative sequence of narrative is here broken because of the *qatal*. If the narrative sequence were to be continued, another *wayyiqtol* would have been used. This use of the forms is agreed upon by most scholars, but the main difference between their view and mine is that while they regard the function of the forms, they think of it as their meaning, while I attempt to relate the use of the forms to their semantic meaning. In this case there is no succession temporally from the *wayyiqtol* to the situation that the *qatal* depicts. In this verse, God did not *first* call light day, and *then* called the darkness night. The latter event is not portrayed as in sequence with the former, and thus it is expressed in the perfective. The same can be seen in e.g. Gen 24.46, 41.11, 41.12 where the *wayyiqtol* is part of a narrative sequence, while the *qatal* is independent of the sequence, and thus expressed by the constative, i.e. the *qatal*.

An inceptive *wayyiqtol* that is not temporally successive is found in Ps 50.18

אִם-רָאִיתָ נָגַב וַתֵּרֶץ עִמּוֹ “When you see a thief, you run off with him”

where the *wayyiqtol* is probably to be understood as beginning at the moment of seeing the thief, thus it is inceptive. The *wayyiqtol* is stative and atelic, while the *qatal* may be stative or dynamic and atelic. Another example is in Gen 31.10

וְאִשָּׁא in

וַיְהִי בַּעַת יָחֵם הַצֹּאן וְאִשָּׁא עֵינֵי וְאָרָא בַּחֲלֹם

“And it happened during the mating of the flocks, that I lifted my eyes and saw in a dream...”

Gen 37.7 has

וְהִנֵּה תִסְבִּינָה אֲלֵמְתֵיכֶם וַתִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶינּוּ לְאֵלְמָתִי

“And look, your sheaf gathered around and began to bow to my sheaf”

the *yiqtol* being telic and the *wayyiqtol* atelic. Both verbs represent advancement from the verb that precedes each of them, and thus they focus on the beginning of the situation and are thus inceptive. Another inceptive *wayyiqtol* is seen in Gen 20.12

וַתְּהִי-לִי לְאִשָּׁה “and so she became my wife”

It is common knowledge that the *wayyiqtol* expresses temporally successive events in narrative. In Jo 1.12 we have an inceptive *weyiqtol* with future reference, temporally successive to the previous situation:

וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם שְׂאוּנִי וְהַטִּילְנִי אֶל-הַיָּם וַיִּשְׁתַּקֵּם הַיָּם מֵעַלֵיכֶם

“And he said to them: ‘Lift me up and throw me into the sea. Then the sea will calm down for you’”

It is a common view of the Hebrew perfective that it portrays the situation as complete (Comrie 1976:18, Waltke & O’Connor 1990:480). The conative and inceptive meanings of the *wayyiqtol* show that this description does not fit the *wayyiqtol*. In the cases where the *wayyiqtol* has been shown to be conative, the situation has not even begun. How, then, can the situation be described as complete? In the cases where it is inceptive, it is also difficult to ascribe this definition to it. These meanings of the verbal form show that the *wayyiqtol* is imperfective, and not perfective as is commonly believed. This does not, of course, exclude that the form that *is* perfective, namely the *qatal*, could portray situations as complete. But there are problems with this view too. The end of a situation can be included in the definition of neither the perfective nor the imperfective aspects, because both aspects may be used to express situations with present reference (Furuli 2005:339). In such situations the present moment intersects the situation somewhere after its beginning and *before its end*. Also, in an example like 2 Sam 16.8 the *qatal* is ingressive, signifying the entrance into a state. The view of the situation as complete is hardly a suitable one in such situations.

#### 5.2.3.4 Continous, frequentative or habitutive *wayyiqtol*s

A continous *wayyiqtol* is in Gen 31.40, a frequentative in 31.41.

In Gen 31.40 we have הָיִיתִי בַיּוֹם אֶכְלָנִי חֶרֶב וּקְרָח בַּלַּיְלָה וַתִּדְרֹךְ שְׁנַתִּי מֵעֵינַי

“Thus I was: by day drought consumed me, and cold by night, and sleep kept fleeing from my eyes” where a *qatal* is followed by a *wayyiqtol*. The latter is probably used with a progressive or habitutive force, but this is mere speculation, since it is difficult to see any difference between the two verbs. The *wayyiqtol* is best interpreted as frequentative, the *qatal* is not, and it is rather continous. In the next verse, verse 41, we have a similar example,

עָבַרְתִּיךָ אַרְבַּע-עֶשְׂרֵה שָׁנָה בַשָּׂנִי בַנְתֶּיךָ וּשְׁשׁ שָׁנִים בַּצֹּאֲנֶךָ וַתַּחֲלֶךְ אֶת-מִשְׁכַּרְתִּי עֶשְׂרֵת מִנִּים

“I worked for you fourteen years for your two daughters and six years for your sheep, and you changed my wages ten times”

The verb in the *wayyiqtol* is in this case telic and punctual, as well as frequentative, and the *qatal* is also telic as well as durative.

Ps 52.9 has three verbs of the prefix-conjugation:

הנה הגבר לא ישים אלהים מעוזו ויבטח ברב עשרו יָעֹז בַּהוֹתוֹ

“Look, there is the man who did not make God his strength, but trusted in his wealth, and strengthened himself in his wickedness”

There seems to be no difference in meaning between the three verbs. The *wayyiqtol* is expressing the same idea as the *yiqtol*s, and this idea seems to be the progressive or habitative. The *wayyiqtol* and the last *yiqtol* are both stative while the first *yiqtol* is dynamic and telic.

#### 5.2.3.5 *Wayyiqtol*s with other interpretations or with more than one possible interpretation

In Gen 42.30 דבר האיש אדני הארץ אתנו קשות ויִתֵּן אֶתנוּ כַּמְרַגְלִים אֶת־הָאָרֶץ

“The man, the lord of the land, spoke harshly to us and took us for spies of the land”, the *qatal* is durative and atelic, and the *wayyiqtol* is telic.

#### 5.2.3.6 Apocopation in the *wayyiqtol*

The common view is that the *wayyiqtol* has as its origin a short preterite form (Waltke & O'Connor 1990:544). This argument does not seem to be valid, both because the *wayyiqtol* does not always have past reference. An even stronger argument against this view is the fact that the *wayyiqtol* is not the only form that is apocopated. Rolf Furuli (Furuli 2005:142-6) lists a number of apocopated *weyiqtol*s. These *weyiqtol*s may have modal force, future reference or past reference. He also gives examples of apocopated *wayyiqtol*s with present or future reference. Whatever the reason is for the statistical patterns of apocopated *wayyiqtol* with past reference and non-apocopated *weyiqtol*s, it seems that the question of apocopation is not related to semantic meaning.

### 5.2.4 The common perfective interpretation of the *wayyiqtol*

This interpretation of the *wayyiqtol* is a consequence of it being used as a narrative form, e.g., its use in temporal succession. This assumes that narrative verbal forms must necessarily be perfective. Here I will present evidence that this is not always the case.

#### 5.2.4.1 The perfective as narrative form

The common view among scholars with an aspect view of the forms is that the *wayyiqtol* is a perfective form, a view which is related to the overwhelming number of *wayyiqtol*s with past reference. Even though it is acknowledged that a form does not need to be perfective just

because of its association with past time, there is another reason for this view. It is well known that in most languages, the verbal forms used in temporal succession in narrative are perfective. According to the common view, this is also the case in classical Hebrew. Because of the nature of aspects as subjective viewpoints, it is not always easy to determine the aspectual value of a verbal form. However, if a verbal form is used in the backbone of a narrative, it may give an indication that the form in question is perfective.

Paul J. Hopper divides narrative into two main parts, referred to as background and foreground. On the choice of verbal forms for different discourse functions, he says: “The perfective aspect is found mainly in kinetic, sequential events which are central to the unfolding of the narrative”, i.e. the backbone or mainline of the narrative. The “imperfective aspect is used typically for backgrounding: situations, descriptions, and actions, and actions which are simultaneous or overlapping with a perfective event” (Hopper 1979:58), and thus constitutes the background information. He defines foreground information as an “event indispensable to narrative”, and background as a “state or situation necessary for understanding motives, attitudes, etc.” (Hopper 1979:61).

The problem in the case of classical Hebrew is that the *wayyiqtol* is employed for all these purposes. It constitutes the backbone of a narrative, but on the other hand, it may be used for simultaneity or in a hendiadys, it may be epexegetical, or used as what we would call the pluperfect. It may also be used in situations “necessary for understanding motives”, e.g., *וַיָּבֹא* in 2 Sam 14.5.

From chapter two, it is clear that the function of a verbal form in a text is not necessarily a good indication of its semantic meaning. On the other hand, the wide range of uses of the *wayyiqtol* may seem difficult to explain. Why, then, is the *wayyiqtol* found with all these different functions? The assumption that all verbs that constitute the backbone of a narrative are perfective is not correct. Rolf Furuli observes that the infinitive absolute is used in some Phoenician inscriptions as a narrative verb, and examples are found in classical Hebrew as well, without anybody ascribing a particular aspectual value to the form because of it (Furuli 2005:156, 332-33).

#### 5.2.4.2 The imperfective as narrative form

The assumption that narrative verbs must be perfective, originates from the description of the perfective aspect of European languages, with its focus on completion. Paul Hopper says regarding the structuring of events in narrative sequences: “The beginning of one event is contingent upon the completion of the preceding event” (Hopper 1979:58), which is probably



true of European and other languages, but it does not apply to classical Hebrew narrative. About the use of the imperfective aspect he says: “[it is a] view of a situation or happening whose completion is not a necessary prerequisite to a subsequent happening” (Hopper 1979:61). The reason for the use of the *wayyiqtol* in temporal succession is found in the value of the imperfective aspect. The common perfective interpretation of the *wayyiqtol*, paradoxically, is derived from the imperfective meaning of the form, more specifically its inceptive aspect value. In classical Hebrew, the end or completion of the former event is *not* the basis for the choice of verbal form in narrative sequence. It is rather the inception of an event subsequent to another. If one wants to confirm that the *wayyiqtol* is perfective by ruling out its imperfectivity, one would probably look for a continuous or frequentative interpretation. When such is not found, one concludes that it is perfective. In doing so, one fails to notice the inceptive value of the form, and that is what has happened in the case of the *wayyiqtol*.

Helen A. Dry (Dry 1983:28) argues that a construction or sentence that moves time forward *refers to a “sequenced point”*, or boundary in the verb. The existence of such a boundary within the verb, according to Dry, is a prerequisite for its moving time forward. The completion of an event, which is required for a subsequent event to begin, marks such a boundary. In such cases, the boundary is the endpoint. The endpoint is not the only possible boundary, though. According to Dry, inceptive verbs refer to an initial boundary, which is what makes it possible to move the time in the narrative forward. I have already demonstrated that the *(way)yiqtol* may have an inceptive value. Dry’s model supports the possibility that the inceptive character of the *wayyiqtol* is the reason for its use in temporal succession. All verbs do not have a boundary at its beginning or end. Those that do not are therefore incapable of moving time forward in temporal succession. The question of such boundaries is related to both Aktionsart and aspect. The Vendlerian categories of accomplishments and achievements move time. States and activities do not, unless their inception is implicated. States and activities that are not inceptive are therefore restricted to the background of narrative. The form used in temporal succession in English is the (perfective) simple past. The progressive is imperfective, i.e. it focuses on a point after the beginning but before the end of a situation. Thus it has no boundary and consequently, it cannot be used for temporal succession (Dry 1983:28). While this is true in regard to the English forms, it is not regarding the *yiqtol*, since it has inception as an inherent feature. The *(way)yiqtol* is thus capable of moving time, i.e. temporal succession.

Greek grammars often mention that the form “imperfect” can be inceptive or conative (Atkinson 1933:142; Goodwin 1997:269). Atkinson further states that the imperfect was used

to narrate past events in Homeric Greek (Atkinson 1933:143). Hermann Koller, too, recognizes this in his article on the *erzählenden Imperfekt*. Interestingly, he points out that the imperfect was in fact the usual narrative form in Homeric Greek, and that it is clearly inceptive in those cases (Koller 1951:87-88). Others have written about the narrative imperfect in Romance languages (e.g., Bertinetto 1987). Most examples of the narrative imperfect provided by S. Fleischman (1990:27-29) are temporally successive. Neither Fleischman nor Bertinetto treats the question of possible inception in regard to the imperfect. Nevertheless, whatever the reason is for employing the imperfect as a narrative form (whether inception is important or not), the last discussion demonstrates that imperfective verbal forms may be used as a narrative verb form, also when temporal succession is involved.

#### 5.2.4.3 Which forms may be used as narrative forms?

It should be noted that the capability to move time forward is something that applies to most verbal forms. In other words, most verbal forms in most languages can probably be used for most uses. It is the particular aspect value of the English (imperfective) progressive and Hebrew participle that prevents them from being used for such a purpose. Even though a form makes no direct reference to the situation's beginning or end, like the *qatal* or infinitive absolute, the boundary required for the movement of time can still be inferred from the context. The aspectual value of e.g., the participle is simply incompatible with such a use, at least according to Dry's theory. While we are talking about imperfective forms, it may be difficult to explain the alleged imperfective meaning of the *weqatal* and its use for temporal succession in future situations, as claimed by some (Van der Merwe 2002:169, Waltke & O'Connor 1990:526). If the *weqatal* has an imperfective value more or less similar to the one of other languages, and provided that Dry's theory is correct, this use of the *weqatal* should not be possible. Whether such a reasoning is correct or not, it is a fact that both the two aspects of Hebrew are suitable to express temporal succession. This can of course be seen in that the *wayyiqtol* as a temporally successive form is in LBH replaced by the *weqatal*. In CBH, likewise, the *weqatal* could easily been used for temporal succession. There is nothing that prevents this, except that there is already a form, *(way)yiqtol*, that fills this function. Also, the *weqatal* is often used to express logical succession.

Dry's theory may explain the discourse functions of the various verbal forms. It may thus provide the connection between discourse function and the underlying semantic meaning of the forms, the existence of which was claimed by Fleischman and Comrie in 2.2.3.

Whether Dry's theory is correct, and whether it in this case may be applied to Hebrew is not certain. It does, however, seem to have some explanatory power.

### 5.2.5 Is the *weqatal* similar in meaning to the *qatal* or to the *(we)yiqtol*?

#### 5.2.5.1 *weqatal* and future reference

The majority of *qatals* have past reference and a few *qatals* have future reference. Most of the *weqatals* have future reference or are modal, and a few have past reference. When any of the forms can have any temporal reference, any variant of the so-called “*waw* conversive theory” is superfluous. If there are *qatals* with future reference and *weqatals* with past reference, it is rather obvious that the *waw* does not convert anything, or, more important, that *qatal* and *weqatal* do not have opposite meaning.

Although the temporal reference of the *weqatal* in most of the cases differs from the ones of the *qatal*, the present analysis shows that many of the functions of the two forms are very much the same, and in fact distinguish these forms from the various varieties of the prefix-conjugation.

In two of the uses most unique to the *qatal* and the *weqatal*, which is in a result clause and as the apodosis of a conditional clause, the situation happens to be *most often located in the future*. The same can be said of the *weqatal* in particular, which is often used to express logical succession or another close relationship to the preceding situation. The future-modal sphere seems to be the natural environment for the expression of *logical* succession, just as the natural environment for *temporal* succession is in the past sphere. It is these facts that the common misunderstanding derives from, that the *weqatal* in itself expresses future time.

The reason for the choice of *weqatal* as the verbal form in these cases is the logical relationship and the close connection between the two verbs connected by the *waw*. This is evident when we look at the cases where some element is inserted between the two verbs. Such an element may be e.g., a clause constituent or the negation **לֹא**, which thus breaks the close connection between the verbs. In these cases, the close connection between the two situations is broken, or at least is no longer focal, and the text reverts to the *yiqtol* (Waltke & O'Connor 1990:526). As in other contexts, the *yiqtol* seems to be the default form when a situation is in the future-modal sphere. A freestanding *qatal* is not used except in uses where the suffix-conjugation is in place (e.g., in irreal conditions, 5.2.5.4).

In the corpus there are 41 conditional clauses that have an apodosis with a past or future reference. There are three clauses with past reference, 38 with future reference. The

principal form in an apodosis is the *weqatal*, with the exception of negative conditionals. In these, the *yiqtol* is used. Of the positive clauses, the *yiqtol* is found twice. In one of them, the apodosis is found before the protasis, and this could be the reason for the deviation from the usual *weqatal* in this case. The corpus also has seven result clauses, in which the only forms are *qatal* and *weqatal*. What can be noted here is that if the temporal reference is past, the *qatal* is used, and if the reference is future we find the *weqatal*.

The apodosis of conditional clauses may, as we have seen, be expressed by the *yiqtol*, and in negative clauses the *yiqtol* is the principal form. Thus, both the two variants of the suffix-conjugation (*qatal* and *weqatal*) as well as the prefix-conjugation are used in the apodosis of conditional clauses. The condition for the choice of form seems to be the positive – negative distinction.

There is another type of clause where only different variants of the prefix-conjugation are used. 50 *yiqtols*, 28 *weyiqtols*, nine cohortatives and two jussives express final clauses in the direct speech of my corpus. In addition to that, one *qatal* and one *weqatal* are used. The latter, 2 Sam 24.2, has

שׁוּט־נָא בְּכָל־שִׁבְטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִדֶּן וְעַד־בְּאֵר שָׁבַע וּפְקְדוּ אֶת־הָעָם וַיִּדְעֹתִי אֵת מִסְפַּר הָעָם

“Go through all the tribes...and number the people, and I will know the number of the people”, where the *weqatal* may constitute a final clause, but it can just as well be interpreted as expressing some more general logical relationship to the preceding. The *qatal* in 2 Sam

20.6 אֲתָה קָח אֶת־עַבְדֵי אֲדֹנֶיךָ וּרְדֵף אַחֲרָיו פֶּן־מֵצָא לוֹ עָרִים בְּצֻרוֹת וְהִצִּיל עֵינָיו

“Take your lord’s servants and pursue him, so that he won’t find fortified cities and escape us” is in a negative final clause, and it should be regarded as an anomaly. The apparatus in the BHS mentions that two manuscripts read *yiqtol* instead of the *qatal*, and that is what we would expect. Another argument that all final clauses are expressed by the *yiqtol* is the fact that of the verbal forms, only the infinitive construct and the *yiqtol* are used after *בַּעֲבוּר* and *לִמְעַן*.

#### 5.2.5.2 *weqatal*: The imperfective aspect?

Apart from all the *weqatals* with *mil’ra* stress having future reference, one of the reasons the form is identified by most as being imperfective are the many frequentative and habitative *weqatals* with past reference. Jan Joosten provides “probably a fairly exhaustive list of occurrences” (Joosten 2006:140), of which all but two are ambiguous in terms of identification as copulative or consecutive *weqatal*, due to verbal suffixes and other factors.

The two remaining verbs listed by Joosten, occurring in direct speech in 1Sam 17.35, have *mil'el* stress. According to Joosten's view, they should have been *mil'ra*. Indeed, an example of a *weqatal* with *mil'ra* stress is seen in prophetic speech Am 4.7, but this occurrence alone does not make a convincing case.

One should note here that e.g., Joosten's definition of iterativity differs from mine. The situations which e.g., Joosten labels "iterative" are better named "frequentative", or "habitulative", which I define as a more specific subgroup under "frequentative". I define iterative and habitulative situations according to L. J. Brinton. She defines the iterative as repeated action on one and the same occasion e.g., "he was knocking on the door", while "the habitual portrays actions repeated on different occasions" (Brinton 1988:54).

Joüon/Muraoka claimed that the form used to express frequentativity in the past is the *weqatal* with *mil'ra* stress: "In the sphere of the past w-qatal is very common. ...it expresses aspect: repeated or durative action." (Joüon/Muraoka 1996:402). Van der Merwe et al identifies the form as the "waw consecutive + perfect", not the "waw copulative" (van der Merwe et al 2002:170). Thus, their view is based upon an entirely wrong assumption, which contradicts the data. Joosten provides himself evidence that contradict his claim that it is the *weqatal* itself that has frequentative meaning. He says regarding *weqatals* with no other element accompanying it: "Such 'free-standing' cases of iterative WEQATAL are nevertheless rather infrequent. In other passages, the iterative meaning is underlined by an adverbial expression of the type 'from year to year'. Or iterative WEQATAL is seconded by YIQTOL" (Joosten 2006:137). Further, "In past-tense contexts, WEQATAL and YIQTOL are marked for iterativity" (Joosten 2006:138). According to Joosten's reasoning, these additional elements underline the already existing meaning of the verbal form. In my view, the situation is quite the opposite. The *(we)qatal*, being the constative aspect, is the more "neutral" aspect, and is thus *not* marked for frequentativity. What expresses the frequentative is not the *weqatal* itself, but rather the adverbial expressions or the imperfective *yiqtol*.

A parallel is given in an example given by Hatav. In Gen 30.21 there is a *qatal* in a temporally successive sequence: וְאַחֵר יָלְדָה בֵּת וְחִקְרָא אֶת-שְׁמָהּ דִּינָה. The expected form in such a function would be the *wayyiqtol*, but here we find a *qatal* preceded by an adverb. Obviously, with an adverb present between the conjunction and the verb, the *wayyiqtol* cannot be used here, and neither does it need to be. As noted by Hatav, in this case it is the adverb that expresses the succession, and not the *qatal* itself (Hatav 1997:186).

Curiously, Joosten mentions an example of a clearly habitual *wayyiqtol* in Ex 16.21, for which he argues that what we see here is an example of a "neutral *wayyiqtol*", and not an

iterative<sup>4</sup> one (Joosten 2006:138), even though the verb in this passage is followed by an habitual adverb. In other words, when a *weqatal* is accompanied by a frequentative/habitual adverb, it must be frequentative, but a *wayyiqtol* in precisely the same context must be interpreted as “neutral”.

In addition to the *weqatals* listed by Joosten, there are also a number of *qatals* and *wayyiqtols* that are used in connection with “iterative” *weqatals*. It is difficult to see why these also should not be interpreted similarly to the *weqatals*. The verbs ראה in 2 Sam 20.12, ויחביאם in 1 Ki 18.4, שטו in Nu 11.8, עברו in Josh 6.8, ויבאו in Judg 6.5 and עשו in 2 Chr 24.11 are all examples of *qatals* and *wayyiqtols* with “iterative”, or rather frequentative or habituated, interpretation. A frequentative verb of the prefix-conjugation (*wayyiqtol* וַתַּחֲלֶף) with the adverbial phrase “ten times” is found in Gen 31.41

זֶה־לִּי עֲשָׂרִים שָׁנָה בְּבֵיתְךָ עֹבֵדְךָ אֲרָבַע־עֶשְׂרֵה שָׁנָה בְּשֵׂתִי בְנֹתֶיךָ וְשֵׁשׁ שָׁנִים בְּצֹאנְךָ וַתַּחֲלֶף אֶת־מִשְׁכָּרְתִּי עֶשְׂרֵת מָנִים:

“Now I have been twenty years in your house, fourteen years I served for your two daughters and six years for your flock, and you changed my wages ten times”.

In Gen 31.7 a *weqatal* of the same verb (וַתַּחֲלֶף), referring to the very same occasion, is seen, also with the same adverbial expression. Thus, Joosten does not base his analysis on a consistent interpretation of the data.

There is a lack of frequentative<sup>5</sup> verbs in direct speech, which poses a problem in an investigation such as this one (Fokkelman 1991:39). Nevertheless, the data from the narrative of Genesis confirm that frequentative situations with past reference are more often expressed by the *weqatal* than by other verbal forms, e.g. the *yiqtol* and the *wayyiqtol*. These forms do more often than the *weqatal* express continuous or progressive situations.

Joosten is of the opinion that the frequentative<sup>6</sup> meaning of the *weqatal* is derived from its modal meaning, and even though he provides evidence for this from Syriac and English (Joosten 1992:7), different explanations may be put forth regarding the different use of the *weqatal* and the (*way*)*yiqtol*. The use of the *weqatal* rather than the (*way*)*yiqtol* also has another side to it. Frequentative adverbials are far more frequent in the biblical text than adverbials expressing continuity/progressivity. If a continuous situation is to be expressed, no adverbials are usually used, and the continuity or progressivity must be expressed by the verbal form itself. The verbal form is most often the *wayyiqtol* or the *yiqtol*. On the other

<sup>4</sup> properly “habituated”

<sup>5</sup> Fokkelman: “iterative”

<sup>6</sup> Joosten: “iterative”

hand, when a frequentative situation is expressed, it often happens to be accompanied by an adverbial expression. In such cases repetition, expressed by the adverbial, needs not be repeated by using an imperfective verbal form, although it may be. Comrie is of the same opinion. He says that frequentative adverbials in Russian are used with the perfective aspect. The imperfective, he says, is not needed, because repetition is expressed by the adverbial (Comrie 1976:31). The question of compatibility of the perfective and imperfective aspects with adverbials of repetition has also been treated by others. P. M. Bertinetto, in his studies on Italian, claims that adverbials of the type “three times” are perfectly compatible with perfective verbs, while imperfective verbs in such contexts are restricted in some ways (Bertinetto 1987:73). In Hebrew, on the other hand, both aspects are compatible with, e.g., repetitive adverbials. Carlota Smith (Smith 1991:87) says that the habitual can be signalled by frequentative adverbials. She then provides English examples of sentences with the simple past, e.g., “Will wrote a report every week”. Later on the same page she gives the example “Marcia fed the cat that year” which has no frequentative adverbial but nevertheless gives an impression that the sentence is to be taken as frequentative. Regarding the lack of an explicit frequentative marker she comments “the interpretation of a sentence as habitual is heavily dependent on pragmatic factors” (Smith 1991:87). In other words it is clear that the frequentative or habitual interpretation does not depend on the verb alone. When we add that the aspects are subjective viewpoints, it is clear that any form may be used in a clause with frequentative interpretation, and that no form is incompatible with such an interpretation. If the writer wants to express explicitly that the situation should be interpreted in such a way, s/he can do so by means of a verbal form or by an adverbial, or both. When we encounter verses such as the ones discussed here, we must ask: “what expresses what?”, i.e., “what is it that expresses the frequentative?”. If one claims that the way in which these mechanisms work in Hebrew are the complete opposite of how they work in other languages, then it should be demonstrated on the basis of data, and not be merely assumed.

The compatibility of the perfective aspect with repetitive adverbials is also another indication that the two aspects are not polar opposites. It shows that the perfective, being constative, has a less specific aspectual value than has the imperfective, since it is used when another element in the sentence specifies the verbal action. If they were polar opposites, it is probable that a frequentative adverbial would be incompatible with a hypothetical perfective aspect with a value as specified as the one of the imperfective.

### 5.2.5.3 *weqatal* “continuing” another form

It has been held by several that the *weqatal* continues the meaning expressed by a previous verb in a different form, most often the *yiqtol* (Joüon/Muraoka 1996:398), and even that the *weqatal* thus loses its individual force (Driver 1998:118).

On the other hand, why should a verbal form with a meaning of its own lose its meaning in some cases and simply repeat the meaning expressed by another form? Such a claim needs to be substantiated to be considered likely. There is another explanation, which is not based on such an assumption: The *weqatal* does not take the meaning of a previous form but what it does is to express a close relationship to the previous situation. The relationship is often a logical relationship, or a consequence following the preceding situation. This relationship is very common with the *weqatal* and is in fact the common denominator in most cases where the *weqatal* is said to have a particular function.

Sometimes it does look like the *weqatal* continues a previous verbal form, e.g., when a *weqatal* seems to continue a final clause (Gen 8.17, 12.13, 18.19, 27.10, 32.12). These cases are no different than others, these *weqatals*, too, express logical succession or consequence.

Gen 12.13

אֶמְרִי־נָא אֶחָתִי אֵת לְמַעַן יֵשֵׁב־לִי בְעִבְרֹךְ וְחַיְתָּה נַפְשִׁי בְגִלְלָךְ

is therefore to be understood as

“Please say that you are my sister, so that it may go well with me for your sake, *and then I will live* thanks to you”.

Gen 18.19

כִּי יִדְעֻתִּיו לְמַעַן אֲשֶׁר יִצְוֶה אֶת־בָּנָיו וְאֶת־בֵּיתוֹ אַחֲרָיו וְשָׁמְרוּ דְרֹךְ ה'

“For I have chosen him, that he may instruct his children, *and [as a consequence] they shall keep* the way of the Lord”.

In Gen 27.10 the *weqatal* does seem to express the continuation of a final clause, introduced by a *yiqtol*. The fact, though, that a final clause is never introduced by a *weqatal* (cf. 5.2.5.1), makes it unlikely that these *weqatals* are to be understood as expressing final clauses. It is not uncommon that the *weqatal* “continues” an imperative, e.g., in Gen 44.4

קוּם דַּרְךְ אַחֲרֵי הָאֲנָשִׁים וְהִשָּׁנָתָם וְאָמַרְתָּ

“Rise and pursue the men, and take them over and say...”

The explanation involving succession or a logical relationship to the preceding situation may well be a suitable explanation here, as suggested by Joüon/Muraoka (1996:398). There may, though, be another explanation for this use of the *weqatal*. The use of *qatal* as a “precative



perfective” in Psalms is noted by van der Merwe (2002:146). This use of the *qatal* is not restricted to Psalms, but is found in the narrative books as well, e.g., Gen 40.14 כִּי אֶם-זָכַרְתִּי ”But remember me”.

#### 5.2.5.4 Irrealis

In the corpus there are 20 verbs, which, judging from the context, are clearly irreal. 16 of them occur in the protasis (6 times) or the apodosis (10 times) of an irreal conditional clause. Of all the 19 irreal verbs, 18 are (*we*)*qatals*, one is a cohortative. The cohortative in 2 Sam 12.8 may be explained in that the writer may have wanted to emphasize the will of the speaker: וְאַתָּנָה לָךְ אֶת-בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיְהוּדָה וְאִם-מְעַט וְאִסְפָּה לָךְ כְּהֹנָה וְכַהֲנָה

“...and I gave you the house of Israel and Judah, and if that had been too little, I would have given you so much more”.

The employment of the (*we*)*qatal* for irreal situations can be explained on the basis of the meaning of the *perfective aspect*. Situations in the irreal mood do not even exist in the real world. Therefore should there be no need to focus even on the internal structure of a situation, one being purely hypothetical.

#### 5.2.5.5 *qatal* and *weqatal* compared to *yiqtol* and *weyiqtol*

The contrast between the *qatal* and the *weqatal* can be to some degree compared to the one between the *yiqtol* and the *weyiqtol*. It is commonly recognized that a higher percentage of *weqatals* are modal, as compared to *qatals* (Joosten 1992:3). The same contrast can be seen between the *weyiqtol* and the *yiqtol*. Of the 1179 *yiqtols* in direct speech in the corpus, 591 (50.1 %) are modal, and of the 133 *weyiqtols*, 98 (73.7 %) are modal. This is because the verbs with *waw* more often introduce modal, subordinate clauses.

While the *yiqtol* is found expressing events in the past, the *weyiqtol* is rarely found with past reference. Both *weqatal* and *yiqtol* are found in the apodosis of conditional clauses, the *weyiqtol* is not. Nevertheless, the *weyiqtol* is still viewed by most scholars to be merely a *yiqtol* with a prefixed *waw*. When the *yiqtol* and the *weyiqtol* are used differently but still regarded as one and the same form, it should not be impossible for the same to be true regarding the *qatal* and the *weqatal*. The main difference in the parallel between (*we*)*qatal* and (*we*)*yiqtol* is, as I see it, a matter of temporal reference. *Qatal* and *weqatal* most often have opposite temporal references, while both the *yiqtol* and the *weyiqtol* most often belong to the future-modal sphere (it should be noted, though, that the *qatal* may also have a modal interpretation, e.g., Gen 17.16, 18.12, 21.7 (2x), Ps 11.3, 132.17). This difference is not

important though; since time is not something the classical Hebrew verbal forms express. Thus, the difference is secondary rather than primary.

### 5.2.6 *Wayyiqtol* and *weqatal* signifying succession

It is said that the *weqatal* expresses temporal or logical sequentiality/succession (e.g. Arnold & Choi 2003:87-88). But my analysis of its use shows that that this kind of succession is seldom, if ever, temporal succession in the same way that is seen in the use of the *wayyiqtol*. While the *wayyiqtol* is used to express temporal sequentiality, the *weqatal* expresses *logical* succession. Most often it is used either in the apodosis of a conditional clause, in a result clause, or in order to express a more general consequence of the preceding. An illustrating example of the difference in use between the two forms is seen in two occurrences of the root יָלַד “to give birth”, the *weqatal* in direct speech, and the *wayyiqtol* in the narrative of Genesis. The latter, וַיֵּלֶד in Gen 20.17, expresses the inceptive idea in an instance of temporal succession in past narrative, while the first, וַיֵּלֶד (twice) in Gen 31.8, constitutes the apodosis of a conditional clause, also with past reference.

The reason for the choice of form in logical versus temporal succession is not, as we have seen, one of temporal reference. The explanation lies rather in the aspectual values of the *weqatal* and the *wayyiqtol*. The latter is used for temporal succession, which brings the focus to the inception of a subsequent situation. In the former, a situation follows the previous situation logically, often as a consequence. Since temporal succession is not the focus here, there is no need for focus on the temporal onset of the situation. It follows from this that the focus should be not on the beginning of the situation. Rather, it is the mere occurrence of the situation that is stated, and hence the constative is used.

### 5.2.7 Is the imperfective aspect of the participle similar to the imperfective aspect of the *yiqtol*?

Like the *yiqtol*, the participle expresses the imperfective aspect. The difference between the two forms is that while the *yiqtol* is a finite form with its specific meaning, including the inceptive or conative of a situation, the participle is nominal in origin and does not have those specialized imperfective values. The participle focuses on a small portion of the situation, and is, semantically speaking, more closely related to the more traditional imperfective aspect(s) of e.g. European languages, as compared to the *yiqtol*.

In this thesis the occurrences of the participle are divided into two major groups, the nominal and the verbal. The verbal uses of the participle is derived from the nominal uses of the form, and thus it is often difficult to ascertain whether the participle is to be interpreted as nominal or verbal in a particular instance. Those instances that are clearly nominal are therefore treated as such, while both the most obvious instances of a verbal participle and the instances that may be interpreted as such are treated as if they were verbal. Passive participles are, with exceptions, treated as if they are adjectival or substantival. When used as a verb, the participle differs from the finite forms in that it does seldom introduce subordinate clauses or express temporal or logical succession from a preceding verb. Even when prefixed by a *waw*, the participle is usually coordinated rather than subordinate. The verbal participle with prefixed *waw* occurs only twice in the direct speech of the present corpus, seven times outside of direct speech, mostly in the prophetic books. There are two cases where we find a participle in the apodosis of a conditional clause, one with future and one with present reference.

Gen 30.1 ואם־אין מתה אנכי "...and if not, I will die". The form expected in this kind of clause is a *weqatal*. One interpretation would be "I will be dying", or, considering that the verb is telic, "I will begin to die". In 4.7 ואם לא תטיב לפתח חטאת רבץ "and if you do not do good, sin lies at the door" a *weqatal* likewise is expected. An alternative interpretation is "sin will be lying at the door" (habitual). This could not, it seems, be expressed by a *yiqtol*, because the *yiqtol* form is, according to the present analysis, always modal or negative in the apodosis of conditional clauses.

In some cases the verbal uses of the participle is similar to the uses of the *yiqtol*. When a situation is intersected by another event, or when a verb has present reference, the participle and the *yiqtol* is often used interchangeably, seemingly with the same meaning. This indicates that the two forms share one or more characteristics, which are revealed in certain situations. This common value of the two forms must be the one commonly ascribed to the imperfective aspect, which is the focus on a point in a situation after its beginning but before its end. This explanation accounts for the similarities between the *yiqtol* and the participle, but at the same time, there is another, which accounts for the differences. In 5.2.4, I introduced Helen A. Dry's model regarding the influence of Aktionsart and aspect on temporal succession. It was explained that in order for a verb to be temporally successive, it must be delimited by a boundary at its beginning or its end. While the (*way*)*yiqtol* has an initial boundary that may be focused on, the participle focuses on a point after the beginning but before the end of a situation, and therefore it has no boundary. This explains why the participle is not used in temporal succession. Even when the active participle has a prefixed *waw* it is not temporally

successive. With the participle, the waw is syntactically (and temporally) coordinating in all eight cases in the texts that I have analysed.

### 5.2.8 Aspect and temporal reference

It is claimed (Joüion/Muraoka 1996:355) that the meaning of each of the two forms in Hebrew is twofold, that they express both tense and aspect. When e.g., the *yiqtol* is found with past reference, it is often easily interpreted as progressive. When the *yiqtol* has future reference, such an interpretation does often seem less probable. Thus, when the *yiqtol* has past reference, it is claimed to express the imperfective aspect but not tense. When it has future reference, it is claimed that it has a future tense value but no aspect value. A criticism of this view was given in 2.1.2. The solution to the problem lies in the Hebrew aspect values. The *qatal* expresses the perfective/constative aspect. When a situation has past reference, unless the writer wants to portray e.g., the inception or the progressivity of it, the *qatal*, merely stating the occurrence of the situation, will often be used. If s/he wants to stress e.g., the progressive aspect, the participle or the *yiqtol* is used. In such cases, its interpretation would be, e.g., “X was doing”. Most scholars agree on this. For situations with future reference, the situation is not as clear. The *yiqtol* with future reference is, as mentioned, claimed to express only tense and not imperfective aspect. My view, importantly, is that if the *yiqtol* is imperfective, it is imperfective also when it has future reference.

In my view, it is the inceptive value of the Hebrew imperfective that is in focus in future situations. The explanation is as follows: From the perspective of the *present*, the inception of a future situation is the most prominent or relevant part of it, since that is the first part of it we will encounter as the course of time flows towards it. In most cases, the focus on a point after the beginning but before the end of the situation is not the most prominent. Since the inception is in focus in most situations with future reference, the *yiqtol* is used for this purpose. The consequence of the aspectual value of the imperfective in Hebrew is the interpretation “X will (begin to) do”, rather than “X will be doing”. In the latter case, the participle can be used.

## 5.3 Aktionsart and the choice of verbal forms

When verbs have present reference, almost any form may be used, as with all other temporal references. On the other hand, the analysis shows that the choice of form is not always entirely arbitrary. The analysis reveals certain patterns regarding the choice of verbal form

when a verb expresses present or future reference. The criterion for the choice of form is some degree determined by the Aktionsart of the verb.

There are 297 verbs with present reference in direct speech for which Aktionsart can be established with reasonable certainty. Of the 178 stative verbs (figure 3, below), 112 are *qatals*, 36 participles, 26 *yigtols*, two *weqatals* and two *wayyigtols*. Of telic verbs (figure 4), at least 11 are *qatals*, four are participles and three are *yigtols*. Of atelic verbs (figure 5), 56 are participles, 37 are *yigtols*, three are *qatals*, four are *wayyigtols* and one is *weyigtol*.

The analysis thus shows that with dynamic, atelic verbs, the two imperfective forms *yigtol* and the participle are most often used, and with verbs which are either stative or both dynamic and telic, the *qatal* is used most frequently. It should also be noted that most of the *qatals* with future reference found in the corpus are either telic or stative. In direct speech there are eleven *qatals* with future reference, of which eight are stative or telic. This tendency can be clearly seen in prophetic and poetic speech as well.

The restriction of using the *qatal* mostly with telic and stative verbs for situations with present and to some degree future reference does not apply to situations with past reference. This seems to indicate that there is a “natural” connection between past and the perfective (see 5.2.2); the *qatal* is used with past events of all Aktionsarten, while there must be particular reasons for the future and present to be expressed by the *qatal*. The reason why the perfective is used to such a high degree for stative, and, more interestingly, for telic situations in the present and the future, could be taken as evidence for a complete – incomplete view of the verbal forms (present and future *qatals* are most often telic, hence “complete”). On the other hand, if the opposition of complete – incomplete is an aspectual opposition based on subjective viewpoint, the Aktionsart feature of telicity should not have any bearing on the choice of verbal form in such cases. Whether the forms express subjective viewpoint or not, there should be no need for the language to base its choice of form solely on a difference in Aktionsart. Bertinetto labels this problem the “PTC – The Perfective = Telic Confusion” (Bertinetto 2001). Regarding the relation between Aktionsart and verbal form in verbs with future reference in particular, it can be noted that it seems that future verbs are telic more often than verbs of other temporal references. If that is true, it can of course explain why so many *qatals* with future reference are telic. This does not explain, though, and nor does it eliminate the fact, that telic verbs with present reference often appear as *qatals*, while atelic ones often appear as *yigtols* or as participles. The whole question of the relation between Aktionsart and the choice of verbal form, as well as the reasons why there seems to be such a relation, are not clear, and is clearly in need of a more thorough investigation. However,

Bertinetto provides a possible solution to the problem. He says that (Bertinetto 2001:184), “[with the progressive,] the (potential) end-point of the telic event is left unspecified”. With verbs unmarked for telicity other constituents should be sufficient for specifying the telicity of the situation, but it is possible that a perfective form further underlines the endpoint of the situation, since it includes both the beginning and end of the situation.

The reason why the *qatal* is used mostly with telic (or stative) verbs may rather be due to the nature of the perfective form. Anyhow, one reason why the perfective seems to include the end of a (telic) situation may be derived from the idea of the perfective, which does not focus on the internal structure of the situation, but merely states the fact of the occurrence of the situation denoted by the verb. As opposed to the imperfective, the constative/perfective thus entails the end of the situation.

Figure 3. The verbal forms used with stative verbs with present reference.

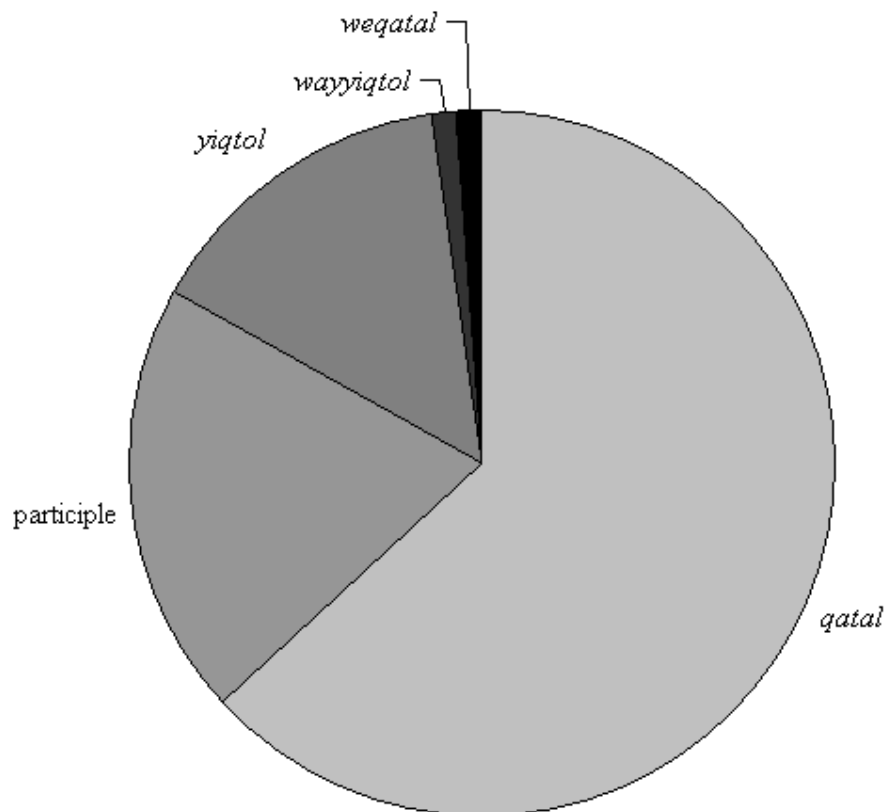


Figure 4. The verbal forms used with verbs that are both durative and telic, with present reference.

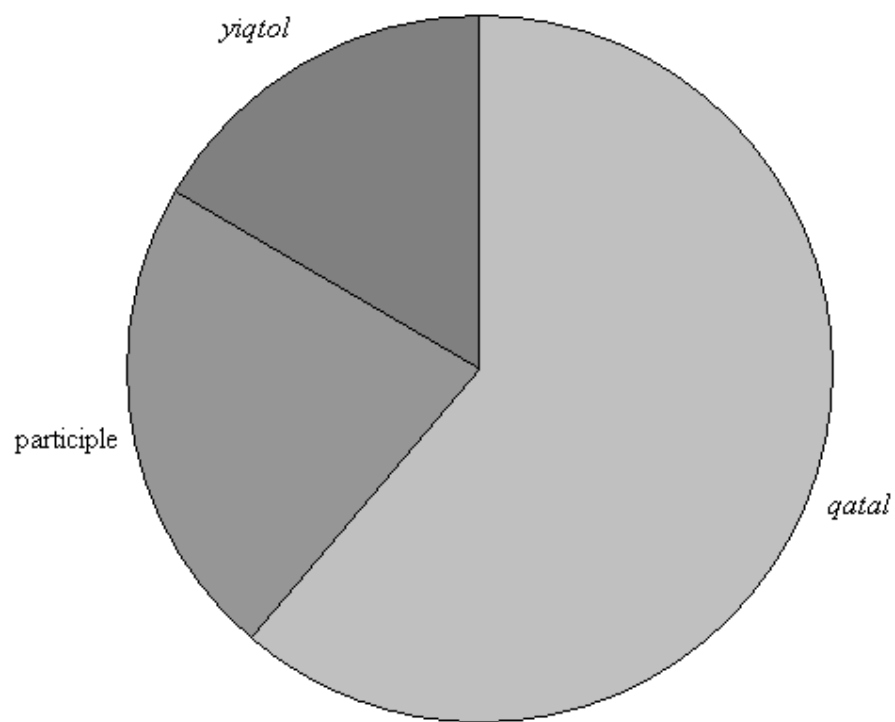
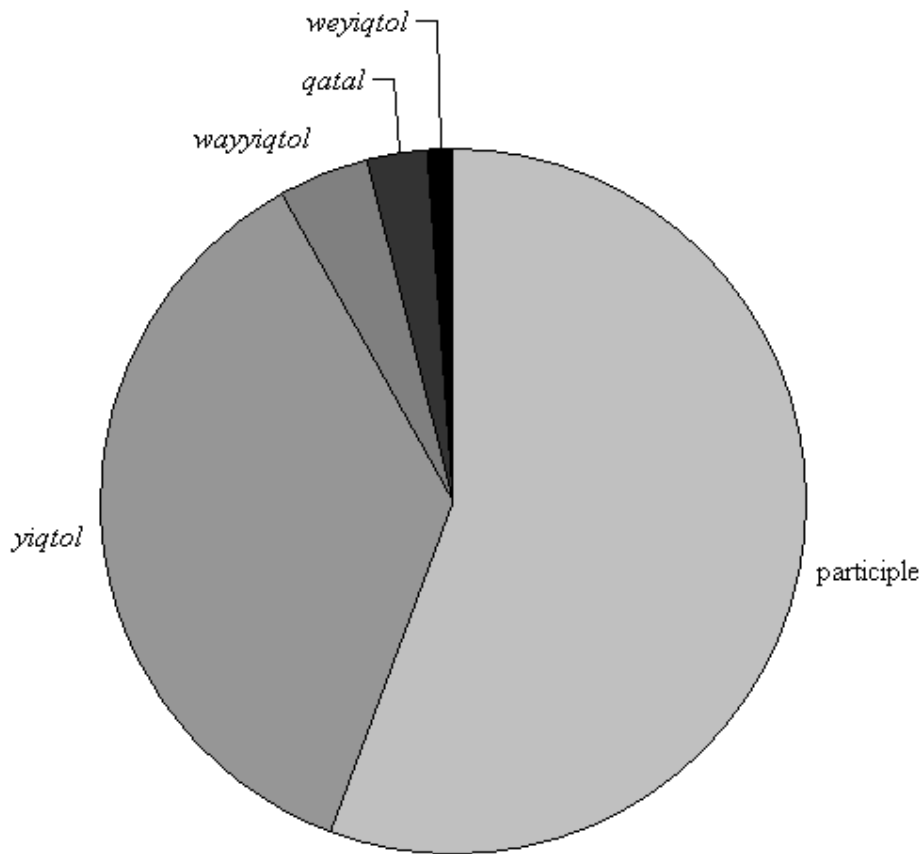


Figure 5. The verbal forms used with verbs that are both durative and atelic, with present reference.



#### 5.4 Intersection of situations

Until now, I have focused on the way in which the verbal forms are used in classical Hebrew, and what functions they have. As mentioned before, the infinitive absolute is used with past reference in Phoenician narrative, even with a prefixed *waw* (Furuli 2005:156, 333). The infinitive absolute with prefixed *waw* is used to drive the narrative forward. Despite this, no one would claim that this use of the infinitive absolute proves that the infinitive absolute is a past tense in Phoenician. This shows that just because the *wayyiqtol* has the same function in classical Hebrew narrative it is not necessarily a past tense, nor need it be perfective.

Discourse analysis, therefore, is not a good way to find the semantic meaning of verbal forms, but rather a method to find their functions, the way in which each verbal form is used in a text.

In most cases one cannot find the aspect of a verbal form just by examining the verb itself. A verbal form does not need to be imperfective just because it expresses a durative or



frequentative action. If one does not differentiate between Aktionsart and aspect, one ends up with a circular reasoning: “The verb is imperfective because the it expresses a durative situation”, or, “the verb is perfective because the it expresses an instantaneous action”. Since aspect is a subjective point of view, the writer can in most cases choose between the different aspect forms as he sees fit (cf. 5.1). In some cases, however, the idea to be expressed is of such a character that one particular form must be employed, if the intended idea is to be conveyed successfully.

There is one particular situation where we can get more reliable evidence as to the true meaning of the verbal forms. This situation is one in which one event is intersected by another event. One of the events thus functions as a background to the other, of the type in Gen 29.9 עֹדְנוּ מְדַבֵּר עִמָּם וְרָחֵל בָּאָה עִם־הַצֹּאן אֲשֶׁר לְאָבִיהָ “While he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep”. The relationship between the two events involves an opposition between them, utilizing the difference in aspect value in the various verbal forms. In Gen 29.9, Rachel's arrival with the sheep is part of the mainline of the narrative, and Jacob's speaking to the men may be called the *background* situation, functioning as a frame for the intersecting situation. The intersecting event thus intersects the background situation. The intersecting event is expressed by the constative *qatal*, while the intersected situation is expressed by the imperfective *yiqtol* or the participle. This can be seen in Gen 40.10 עָלְתָה נֹצֶה “...and as it was budding, its blossoms shot forth”. The aspectual opposition can even be seen in the English translation. In Gen 27.40

וְהָיָה כְּאִשֶּׁר תִּרְדּוּ וּפָרַקְתָּ עָלָיו מִעַל צְוֹאֲרֶךְךָ

“And when you break loose, you will break off his yoke from your neck”,

the *yiqtol* may, as mentioned earlier, be interpreted as an inceptive *yiqtol*. Another possibility is to see it as an intersected situation, the *weqatal* intersecting it. In that case the *yiqtol* must be interpreted differently, as a situation with durative Aktionsart.

Either of the two situations may be expressed by other means than using the constative or imperfective aspect. The intersected situation may thus be expressed by e.g. the infinitive construct, as in Gen 48.7

וְאֵנִי בָּבֹאִי מִפָּדָן מֵתָה עָלַי רָחֵל בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן

“And I, as I was traveling from Paddan, Rachel died in the land of Canaan”

Treated earlier is difference between stative and fientive verbs and the relationship between Aktionsart and the choice of verbal form. It was shown that stative and telic verbs do more than other verbs occur as *qatals*. Relating to the present subject, it seems that a *qatal* does not

necessarily need to express the intersecting foreground situation. It may, if it is *stative*, be used to express the intersected background. An example can be seen in Gen 9.16

וְהָיְתָה הַקֶּשֶׁת בַּעֲנָן וְרָאִיתִיהָ לִזְכֹּר בְּרִית עוֹלָם

“When the rainbow is in the sky, I will see it to remember the eternal covenant”

The *weqatal* וְהָיְתָה is standing in an opposition to the *weqatal* וְרָאִיתִיהָ. The first verb is stative, and may thus be contrasted with the second, which in Hebrew seems to show the character traits of a fientive verb. A second example is Gen 41.10

פָּרַעַה קֶצֶף עַל-עַבְדָּיו וַיִּתֵּן אֹתִי בְּמִשְׁמָר בֵּית שַׂר הַטַּבָּחִים

“Pharaoh was angry with his servants, and placed me in custody with the captain of the guard”

where the *qatal* קֶצֶף may be seen as a stative verb, “to be angry”. Alternatively, the *qatal* can be interpreted as ingressive, “Pharaoh became angry”. In this case the sentence would get a different meaning. The situation expressed by the *qatal* comes first, and the *wayyiqtol* expresses the event that follows temporally. It is important to notice that in the cases where a stative verb is employed to express the intersected (background) situation, it is not the stativity in itself that is the key issue; it is rather its durativity. Stative situations must be interpreted as durative, since it is difficult to imagine a state that has not a duration in time. An intersected situation, in order to be intersected, must have begun before the point in time when it is intersected by another event, and often it continues after the intersecting event. Because of this, it must necessarily have a duration. This is also the reason intersected situations are often found in the imperfective aspect. The imperfective aspect portrays the situation as holding at a point in time usually within the duration of the situation. Intersecting events, on the other hand, are most often punctiliar. When they are not, the inception of the situation may be in focus.

The phenomenon of intersected and intersecting is not very common in direct speech. This construction is much more common in narrative. Here, the use of forms expressing the two ideas is much the same as in direct speech, but with one major difference, which can shed some more light on the meaning of the verbal forms. Narrative employs the *wayyiqtol* to a greater degree than does direct speech, also for ideas expressed by other forms in direct speech. That is true of this construction also. Interestingly, narrative sometimes employs the *wayyiqtol* both for the intersected and the intersecting event.

The reason why one and the same form may be used for both these ideas lies in the nature of the aspect value of the *(way)yiqtol*. An example of this is Gen 25.29

וַיִּזְרַק יַעֲקֹב נֹזֶר וַיִּבָּא עֶשָׂו מִן-הַשָּׂדֶה

“And while Jacob was cooking stew, Esau came from the field”.

The first verb represents the background or intersected situation, employing the continuous or progressive aspect of the *wayyiqtol*. The second employs the inceptive aspect, focusing on the starting point of the event: “Once, when Jacob was cooking food, Esau came from the field”.

This shows two different values of the imperfective aspect, which are utilized in order to make an opposition that most other languages would have to express using two different forms, viz., the perfective and the imperfective.

## 5.5 The “perfect” notion

Many languages have a separate form called the perfect, expressing “has done”. Thus, “the perfect indicates that the past situation has current relevance (i.e. relevance at the present moment)” (Comrie 1985:25). Furuli labels this notion *present completed*. “The temporal reference is present, but the situation is terminated” (Furuli 2005:50).

It does not have a separate form in Hebrew, and this interpretation has to be based on the context.

The notion of the English perfect is not really one, but two. The first is the situation that is terminated but has present relevance. The second is a situation which began in the past and which still holds. The latter can further be subcategorized into two categories, fientive and stative situations. There are differences as to what Hebrew verbal forms are used to express either notion. Of the 176 present completed in the corpus, 164 are *qatals*, 9 *wayyiqtols* and three are what is likely to be *qatals* of hollow roots. Of the 40 fientive situations that started in the past and still hold, 38 are *qatal* and two participles. In addition, there are two *wayyiqtols* (ותגדל “you (have) made great” in Gen 19.19 and וישמר “he (has) kept” in Gen 26.5) that may be interpreted as such, but they are rather dubious. Of the four stative situations that started in the past and still hold at the present moment, three are *qatal* and one is *wayyiqtol*.

What we can see from this is that the *qatal* is used for all three categories; the *wayyiqtol* is used for all except fientive situations still holding. This category missing from the *wayyiqtols* is found with participles, and is the only category with which the participle is found. What would be interesting to find out is with which of these verbal form(s) the *yiqtol* would show similarities. Unfortunately, the *yiqtol* is not found in the present corpus in any of these senses.

## 5.6 Word order and modality

It is said that there is a connection between word order and modal verbs. It is a well-known fact that jussives are often clause-initial. H. B. Rosén extends this and contends that since the *qatal* in *weqatal* forms are preceded by a waw and so are clause-initial, the *weqatal* is a modal form as well (Rosén 1969, in Cook 2004:265). On the other hand, he does not extend it to the *wayyiqtol*. From the present analysis of direct speech in Genesis, it can be seen that verbs with cohortative meaning are also clause-initial, and that cohortatives are clause-initial even more often than jussives. Jussives, then, are not always clause-initial, and in many cases verbs with a non-modal interpretation are clause-initial. As a matter of fact, when the *yiqtol* has past, present or future reference, the most frequent word order is verb – subject or verb – object in independent clauses. For the *qatals* with non-modal interpretations, the distribution of clause-initial verbs balances the clauses with non-initial verbs. In the few cases where the *qatal* is modal, the verb is always clause-initial. Contrary to what Cook (2002:274) contends, *yiqtol*s with modal interpretations<sup>7</sup> are most often preceded by either the subject or the object of the clause. Of the twenty-two verbs of the prefix-conjugation with cohortative interpretation in independent clauses, seventeen are clause-initial, two has the subject in first position, and in the two last cases, and the verb alone constitutes the clause. Of the thirty-six jussives, twenty-seven are clause-initial, and the remaining nine have the subject first. In at least five of the latter, the subject may be interpreted as expressing the *casus pendens*.

It seems that word order is not dependent on whether the verb is modal or not, but rather on what kind of modal nuance is expressed. Moreover, word order is connected to clause type. In both positive and negative final- and result clauses, the verb is always clause-initial. The only exception in the present corpus is Gen 47.19 *וְהָאֲדָמָה לֹא תִשָּׁמָה* "...and that the land may not be desolate". The apodosis of conditional clauses is different. Here the verb may be clause-initial or may have a nominal constituent first.

## 5.7 Summary and conclusions

In 5.2 the meaning of the different verbal forms are demonstrated. The *yiqtol* expresses the imperfective aspect, which focuses on a small part of the situation depicted. This may be just before the point of inception of the situation, it may be at its inception, or it may be after its beginning but before its end. These values of the imperfective are related to modality. The *wayyiqtol* is shown to be similar to the *yiqtol* in its aspectual value. While in most other

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<sup>7</sup> save jussives and cohortatives

languages the narrative form is perfective, it is demonstrated that the inceptive value of the imperfective is the motivation for its use as a narrative form in Hebrew (5.2.4). This is supported by evidence from other languages. The participle, on the other hand, has a value that corresponds to the common definition of the imperfective of most languages. Thus, Hebrew has two forms that can be defined as imperfective. The *qatal* is perfective, and so is the *weqatal*. The perfective includes both the beginning and the end of a situation, but is best described as constative, stating the occurrence of the situation. The inceptive boundary of the *wayyiqtol* makes it suitable for use in temporal succession. The *weqatal*, despite its perfectivity, is not used in temporal succession in CBH. There is thus a convention in favour of the *wayyiqtol* in this function. Likewise, there is a convention to the use of the *weqatal* in logical succession. This use is motivated by the constative and its lack of focus on either the beginning or end of the situation. From the discussion in 5.2.5.2 it is clear that the *weqatal* is perfective, and that its common interpretation as imperfective is misguided.

The short summary above summarizes the discussions that suggest the presented aspect view of the forms. There is evidence that is more convincing, however. The examples provided of *wayyiqtols* where the situation had just began but was not completed, are cases of clearly inceptive *wayyiqtols*. This shows that the *wayyiqtol* is not perfective as most scholars claim. The fact that the *wayyiqtol* can be used for both intersecting and intersected situations shows the aspectual complexity of the form, which can be e.g., inceptive or progressive (5.4).

## 6.0 Conclusions

In 2.2 I presented a number of common assumptions on which most common theories regarding the classical Hebrew verbal system are based. The first of them was that all languages, including Hebrew, are tense languages. The second was that narrative is the best text to use to find the meaning of the verbal forms. The view that function equals meaning was a third. The last of the presented assumptions was that the meaning of the two pairs of forms, viz., the *qatal* and *yiqtol* and the *wayyiqtol* and *weqatal* are mutually exclusive, i.e. they stand in a polar opposition. Most of the views regarding the HVS are based on, or has a strong inclination towards the notion of deictic time. In chapter 4 I demonstrated that there is no sound basis for the view that classical Hebrew is based on tense. This conclusion of chapter 4 is based upon the results of two different approaches towards temporal reference.

I began this project with the working hypothesis that direct speech is a text type that is more neutral as compared to e.g., narrative in terms of the expression of the three temporal spheres. The analysis of the text types in chapter 4 supports the hypothesis. The basis for the analysis was the acknowledgement that a statistical analysis of temporal reference for each verbal form in a text has serious shortcomings. This is so because the distribution of temporal references for each verbal form depends on the distribution of temporal references when all the verbs in all of the forms are included. If a text or text type has a high percentage of verbs with past reference, every verbal form represented in the text will have a higher percentage of past verbs than if the text had a low number of verbs with past reference. Rather, temporal reference must be taken as a point of departure. In doing so, we can easily see how the different temporal references are expressed by means of the different verbal forms. This analysis investigates what verbal forms are used to express the three temporal spheres past, present and future. It shows what forms are used to express each of the temporal references, and to what degree they do so. It also shows the differences that exist in this respect between the text types.

The analysis shows that there exists an opposition between narrative on one side and discourse, encompassing direct speech, prophetic speech and poetic speech, on the other. This result is interesting because of the contrast it represents to the common views on the subject. According to the traditional view, poetry should be avoided in studies of the meaning of Hebrew verbal forms, on account of the alleged unpredictable behaviour and even random application of verbal forms in poetry. The consequence of the demonstrated opposition between narrative and poetry / direct speech is that if poetry is to be avoided in such studies,

then direct speech also must be abandoned. Following the results of this analysis, the argument of preference for narrative against poetry as corpus becomes unbearable. The use of verbal forms in narrative, then, is somewhat different from all other text types. This suggests that classical Hebrew narrative was restricted by certain conventions, which did not apply in writing text of other types or genres. The results of the analysis in chapter 4 show that the second assumption is not correct, narrative is not the preferable text type to use in the search for the meaning of the forms. Even though the analysis of the text types shows that there is little difference between poetry and e.g., direct speech in the way the verbal forms are used in terms of temporal reference. Nevertheless, there are difficulties with poetry as well. The nature of poetry makes it difficult to analyse the meaning of the verbal form used in each occurrence of a verb. Based on these facts, I concluded in chapter 4 that direct speech is a more neutral form of expression, as compared to both narrative and poetry.

In chapter 5 I presented my analysis of the verbs in the direct speech of my corpus. There I provided evidence that the verbal forms of Hebrew represent aspects, rather than, e.g., tenses. I also show that the functions of the verbal forms do not equal their meaning. Their semantic meaning motivates the functions that they have, however (e.g., Fleischman 1990:23). I view the *qatal* as perfective. I claim that the Hebrew perfective form does not place any particular focus on the completion/end of the situation it portrays, nor it is an accurate description to say that it portrays the situation as “complete”. Since the perfective in Hebrew includes both the beginning and end of the situation, without stressing any part of the situation more than others, I find that the best description of the form is that it is *constative*, merely stating the occurrence of the situation.

I take the *yiqtol* to be imperfective, which focuses on a part of the situation only. The common description of the *yiqtol* as portraying the situation as incomplete is bound to the “completeness” or “completedness” interpretation of the *qatal*, and if the latter view is abandoned, the “incomplete” description of the *yiqtol* is not appropriate. The aspect value of the classical Hebrew imperfective differs to some extent from the value of the imperfective in many other languages. The part of the situation where its focus is placed may be after its beginning but before its end, as in most languages, or it may be on its inception. It may even be at the point just before the situation begins, in which case it is *conative*, expressing attempt. The focusing on these parts of the situation is related to the modality of the *yiqtol*. Just as there is a relation between future reference and modality (Lyons 1977:677), there is, then, a relation between imperfectivity and modality. Several, as pointed out in 5.2.1, have suggested this relation. The participle also represents an imperfective aspect. The value of the participle,

however, seems to be more or less equal to the imperfective in most languages, focusing on an internal point of the situation, after its beginning but before its end. Thus, classical Hebrew has two forms that can be defined as imperfective.

Further, I demonstrate that the meaning of the *weqatal* and the *wayyiqtol* is not opposite the meaning of their counterparts without *waw*. The reason why these forms have received their common interpretation is based on their apparent use as compared to the forms without *waw*. Based on the aspectual values that I present for the forms I show that the motivation for the use of the forms is different than according to the traditional views. Thus, the *weqatal* is used much in the same way as the *qatal*, and the same is true regarding the relation between the different variants of the prefix-conjugation.

The functions of the *weqatal* is often said to be that of temporal or logical succession. My analysis shows that the succession of the *weqatal* is often logical, but hardly ever temporal. In the cases where it can be interpreted as temporal, this interpretation is entailed by its logical succession. In a chronological sequence of events the movement of time (i.e., temporal succession) has as its prerequisite that the verbal form used for this purpose has a boundary represented by an endpoint (Dry 1983:28). The endpoint may be at the beginning or the end of the situation.

In many languages, temporal succession is undertaken by the perfective aspect, focusing on the end of the situation. In classical Hebrew, this function is filled by the imperfective (*way*)*yiqtol*, which focuses on, e.g., the inception of the situation. That is not to say that the (*we*)*qatal* could not be used, but in Classical Hebrew the *wayyiqtol* happens to be used for this purpose. In LBH, the *weqatal* is used to a greater extent, and is taking over the function of the *wayyiqtol*. Dry's theory explains why the participle is never used for temporal succession. Focusing on a point after a situations beginning but before its end, the participle does not have any boundaries at its endpoints. Therefore it cannot move time, i.e., be used in temporal succession. The use of the *weqatal* in logical succession is motivated by the constative aspect of the (*we*)*qatal*. In a sequence of logical succession, there is no need for an initial or a final boundary as focused on by the verbal form. The (*we*)*qatal* does indeed have such boundaries, at both its endpoints, i.e., both at its beginning and its end, but it does not place the focus on one part of the situation in particular. In logical succession, the focus is rather on the occurrence of the situation, hence the constative aspect. As the analysis shows, temporal succession is not part of the *meaning* of the *wayyiqtol*. This is an implicature of the context as well as of the conjunction *waw*, and it is the inceptive value of the (*way*)*yiqtol* that makes this use of the form suitable for such a purpose.



The *wayyiqtol*, then, is basically a *yiqtol* with prefixed *waw*. I demonstrated in chapter 5 why it must be so. First, I provided examples where it is clear that the *wayyiqtol* must be interpreted as inceptive, conative, or even modal. In these cases it cannot be perfective. Second, there is the issue with intersection. I gave examples that the *wayyiqtol* may portray a situation being intercepted by another. This is a function that imperfective verbs have, and in Hebrew it is often filled by the participle. It is the result of the imperfective focusing on a point after the beginning but before the end of a situation. This particular aspect value can be expressed in Hebrew by both the participle and the (*way*)*yiqtol*. At the same time, even in the same sentence, a *wayyiqtol* verb may intersect another expressed by the same form. In such a case, it is the inceptive point of the intersecting *wayyiqtol* that intersects the other *wayyiqtol* situation, which is, e.g., progressive or frequentative.

The reasons for the flawed interpretations of the meaning of the Hebrew verbal forms are based upon too many assumptions that are held to be true. Some of these are held to be true for Hebrew because they are valid for other languages. Others are based on a lack of understanding of the need to distinguish between semantics and pragmatics. These factors are combined with the lack of recognition that the Hebrew verbal forms should be studied in their own right, because they do not necessarily correspond to the values of verbal forms in other languages.

From the analysis of the text types in chapter 4, it became clear that there are consistent differences between the text types in regard to the relation between temporal reference and verbal form. The result was the two types discourse and narrative. How is this to be explained, when it is at the same time clear from the analysis that the classical Hebrew verbal forms do not signal deictic time? This is a subject for future research. In future studies of temporal reference in direct speech, the corpus should be also be expanded to include more of the prose books, and perhaps also to include texts from the Late Biblical Hebrew corpus.

This study has pointed out some of the more important of these misguided assumptions as well as the flawed methodologies which constitute the basis of many studies in the field. In chapters 4 and 5 a different method and consequently a different view of the HVS was presented, and which fits the data in a more consistent manner than the traditional views do.

## Appendix

The following selection of tables show to what degree e.g., a particular temporal sphere is expressed by a particular verbal form. If the table for direct speech in 1 Samuel says “non-succ 83.5”, that means that in direct speech in 1 Samuel, *non-successive past* is expressed by the *qatal* in 83.5 % of the cases. Consequently, the remaining 16.5 % are expressed by other forms. The numbers on either side of the percentages are the absolute numbers on the basis of which the percentages were calculated.

Table A1. To what degree the temporal references in 1 Samuel are expressed by the *qatal*

<b>1 Samuel</b>		<b><i>Qatal</i></b>			
		<b>Direct Speech-----</b>		<b>Narrative-----</b>	
		<b>TR</b>	<b>qatal</b>	<b>qatal</b>	<b>TR</b>
<b>Past</b>		<b>232</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>1535</b>
Non-succ		182	<b>83.5</b>	152	354
Simultaneous				8	70
<b>Successive</b>					
Not defined	6	<b>16.7</b>	1	13	30
CC-A	1	<b>100.0</b>	1		
Intersected					19
Intersecting				4	<b>19.1</b>
<b>Pres</b>	103	<b>28.2</b>	29		2
<b>Fut</b>	<b>277</b>		<b>2</b>		
Non-succ.	178	<b>0.6</b>	1		
CC-A	19	<b>5.3</b>	1		

Table A2. To what degree the temporal references in Psalms are expressed by the *qatal*

<b>Psalms</b>	<b><i>Qatal</i></b>					
	Direct Speech-----			Poetic speech-----		
	TR		qatal	qatal		TR
<b>Past</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>76.5</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>72.4</b>	<b>87</b>
Non-succ	15	<b>86.7</b>	13	63	<b>82.9</b>	76
<b>Pres</b>	39	<b>41.0</b>	16	95	<b>41.1</b>	231
<b>Fut</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>1</b>			<b>37</b>
Non-succ.	17	<b>5.9</b>	1			35

Table A3. To what degree the temporal references in Genesis are expressed by the *yiqtol*

<b>Genesis</b>	<b><i>yiqtol</i></b>					
	Direct Speech-----			Narrative-----		
	TR		yiqtol	yiqtol		TR
<b>Past</b>	<b>311</b>		<b>6</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>2363</b>
Non-succ	187	<b>3.2</b>	6	12	<b>3.6</b>	337
<b>Pres</b>	101	<b>21.8</b>	22	2	<b>25.0</b>	8
<b>Fut</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>54.2</b>	<b>129</b>			
Non-succ.	170	<b>67.1</b>	114			
<b>Successive</b>						
TS	4	<b>50.0</b>	2			
FC	9	<b>77.8</b>	7			
CC-A	12	<b>16.7</b>	2			

Table A4. To what degree the temporal references in 1 Samuel are expressed by the *weqatal*

<b>1 Samuel</b>	<b><i>weqatal</i></b>			
	Direct Speech-----		Narrative-----	
	TR		weqatal	TR
<b>Past</b>	<b>232</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>32</b>
Non-succ	182	<b>0.6</b>	1	15
Simultaneous				4
<b>Successive</b>				<b>5.7</b>
TS	40			1
				<b>0.1</b>
Hd				2
Intersected				<b>5.0</b>
Intersecting				2
				<b>9.5</b>
<b>Pres</b>	103	<b>2.9</b>	3	
<b>Fut</b>	<b>277</b>		<b>92</b>	
Non-succ.	178	<b>16.3</b>	29	
Simultaneous	1	<b>100.0</b>	1	
<b>Succession</b>				
Not defined	40	<b>82.5</b>	33	
TS	11	<b>81.8</b>	9	
RC	1	<b>100.0</b>	1	
CC-A	19	<b>68.4</b>	13	
<b>P fut</b>	2	<b>50.0</b>	1	

Table A5. To what degree the temporal references in Psalms are expressed by the *yiqtol*

<b>Psalms</b>	<b><i>yiqtol</i></b>					
	Direct Speech-----			Poetic Speech-----		
	TR		<i>yiqtol</i>	<i>yiqtol</i>		TR
<b>Past</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17.7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14.9</b>	<b>87</b>
Non-succ	15	<b>6.7</b>	1	10	<b>13.2</b>	76
TCO				1	<b>100.0</b>	1
Simultaneous	1	<b>100.0</b>	1			1
<b>Successive</b>						
TS				1	<b>50.0</b>	2
<b>Pres</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>51.3</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>48.1</b>	<b>231</b>
<b>Fut</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>88.5</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>73.0</b>	<b>37</b>
Non-succ.	17	<b>94.1</b>	16	26	<b>74.3</b>	35
<b>Successive</b>						
FC	2	<b>100.0</b>	2			1

Table A6. To what degree the temporal references in Genesis are expressed by the *wayyiqtol*

<b>Genesis</b>	<b><i>Wayyiqtol</i></b>					
	Direct Speech-----			Narrative-----		
	TR		<i>wayy</i>	<i>wayy</i>		TR
<b>Past</b>	<b>311</b>		<b>115</b>	<b>1973</b>	<b>83.5</b>	<b>2363</b>
Non-succ	187	<b>4.3</b>	8	50	<b>14.8</b>	337
TCO				12	<b>92.3</b>	13
Simultaneous	4	<b>25.0</b>	1	20	<b>47.6</b>	42
<b>Successive</b>						
Not defined	49	<b>95.9</b>	47	17	<b>100.0</b>	17
TS	45	<b>100.0</b>	45	1640	<b>99.8</b>	1643
Conative				1	<b>100.0</b>	1
Hd	2	<b>100.0</b>	2	35	<b>100.0</b>	35
Epex.	3	<b>100.0</b>	3	1	<b>100.0</b>	1
Intersected	1			9	<b>52.9</b>	17
Intersecting	2	<b>50.0</b>	1	21	<b>77.8</b>	27
<b>Modal</b>	<b>449</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>1</b>			<b>3</b>
<b>Past modal</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>50.0</b>	<b>1</b>			<b>5</b>

Table A7. To what degree the temporal references in MP are expressed by the *wayyiqtol*

<b>Minor Prophets</b>		<b><i>wayyiqtol</i></b>							
	<b>Direct Speech-----</b>			<b>Prophetic Speech</b>			<b>Narrative-----</b>		
	TR	<i>wayy</i>	<i>wayy</i>	TR	<i>wayy</i>	<i>wayy</i>	TR	<i>wayy</i>	TR
<b>Past</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>15.0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>24.1</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>204</b>		<b>248</b>
Non-succ	30	<b>3.3</b>	1	19	<b>10.1</b>	188	2	<b>5.9</b>	34
TCO									2
Simultaneous	2			2	<b>100.0</b>	2	1	<b>25.0</b>	4
<b>Successive</b>									
Not defined							3	<b>100.0</b>	3
TS	6	<b>83.3</b>	5	25	<b>100.0</b>	25	169	<b>99.4</b>	170
RC							1	<b>100.0</b>	1
Intersecting				1	<b>100.0</b>	1			
Hendiadys						1	19	<b>100.0</b>	19
Epexegetical				1	<b>100.0</b>	1	1	<b>100.0</b>	1
<b>Pres</b>	49			4	<b>1.1</b>	376			
<b>Fut</b>	<b>48</b>			<b>1</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>701</b>			
Non-succ.	42			1	<b>0.2</b>	630			

Table A8. Temporal references in the texts and the temporal references of the *qatal*: The total number of verbs with each temporal reference in the texts and the number of *qatals* in each text.

<b>Text type</b>		<b>Past</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Future</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Genesis DS	All verbs	311	101	238	671	1321
	<i>qatal</i> only	174	42	5	189	410
Genesis Narrative	All verbs	2363	8	-	113	2484
	<i>qatal</i> only	290	1	-	107	398
1 Samuel DS	All verbs	232	103	277	348	960
	<i>qatal</i> only	154	29	2	130	315
1 Samuel Narrative	All verbs	1535	2	-	31	1568
	<i>qatal</i> only	179	-	-	45	224
2 Samuel DS	All verbs	171	65	139	239	614
	<i>qatal</i> only	110	32	4	65	211
MP DS	All verbs	40	49	48	187	324
	<i>qatal</i> only	30	15	4	21	70
MP Proph. speech	All verbs	228	376	701	353	1658
	<i>qatal</i> only	133	165	9	147	454
MP Narrative	All verbs	248	-	-	7	255
	<i>qatal</i> only	21	-	-	5	26
Psalms DS	All verbs	17	39	26	87	169
	<i>qatal</i> only	13	16	1	23	53
Psalms Poetic sp.	All verbs	87	231	37	201	556
	<i>qatal</i> only	63	95	-	57	215

Table A9. Temporal references in the texts and the temporal references of the *yiqtol*: The total number of verbs with each temporal reference in the texts and the number of *yiqtol*s in each text.

<b>Text type</b>		<b>Past</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Future</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Genesis DS	All verbs	311	101	238	671	1321
	<i>yiqtol</i> only	6	22	129	299	456
Genesis Narrative	All verbs	2363	8	-	113	2484
	<i>yiqtol</i> only	12	2	-	8	22
1 Samuel DS	All verbs	232	103	277	348	960
	<i>yiqtol</i> only	2	32	145	134	313
1 Samuel Narrative	All verbs	1535	2	-	31	1568
	<i>yiqtol</i> only	24	1	-	4	29
2 Samuel DS	All verbs	171	65	139	239	614
	<i>yiqtol</i> only	6	11	79	126	222
MP DS	All verbs	40	49	48	187	324
	<i>yiqtol</i> only	3	11	27	141	182
MP Proph. speech	All verbs	228	376	701	353	1658
	<i>yiqtol</i> only	16	114	311	144	585
MP Narrative	All verbs	248	-	-	7	255
	<i>yiqtol</i> only	-	-	-	2	2
Psalms DS	All verbs	17	39	26	87	169
	<i>yiqtol</i> only	3	20	23	55	101
Psalms Poetic sp.	All verbs	87	231	37	201	556
	<i>yiqtol</i> only	13	111	27	114	265



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## Abstract

The background for the project is the elusive character of the classical Hebrew verbal system. In most languages the time in which an action is located is shown in the form of the verb. Such a system is known as *tense*, in which there is a consistent relation between verbal form and temporal reference. In classical Hebrew this relation is not consistent, and therefore it cannot be explained on the basis of tense. More than one millennium of Hebrew studies has not been able to explain satisfactorily the nature of the verbal forms. One of the reasons for this is a number of assumptions on which most theories have been based. One common assumption is that all languages have tenses. The atemporal behaviour of the Hebrew “tenses” has been attempted explained in various ways by those who defend a tense theory. My analysis uncovers the weaknesses associated with the tense view, and why it should be abandoned. However, most scholars today see the forms as aspects, i.e., as different ways of portraying an action. Most of these theories have serious weaknesses as well. Their meaning has evaded most of those searching for it, much because their functions have been interpreted as their meaning. Other reasons are e.g., the confusion between aspect on one side and *Aktionsart* on the other. Another assumption is that narrative text is the best place to look for the meaning of the forms. The results of my analysis suggests that this is not the case, and as a result I find that verbs in direct quotation in texts, or direct speech, is a better place to find their meaning. This is because I see direct speech as a more neutral way of expression, not bound by narrative conventions uncovered by my analysis. Using verbs in direct speech in the analysis, I present my own view of the nature of the forms. As many others, I propose an aspectual basis for the classical Hebrew verbal system. The most serious obstacle to a solution of the problem is the misguided interpretation of the so-called consecutive forms. My aspectual theory provides somewhat new definitions of the aspectual values perfective and imperfective, which explain the use of both the free-standing forms as well as the consecutive ones. I propose that the meanings of the latter forms are the opposite of what is usually claimed. The aspectual values, according to my theory, are those of subjective viewpoints, independent of the objective notions of tense and *Aktionsart*. The consecutive imperfect, usually claimed to be a perfective narrative form, is used to express temporal succession in narrative, not because of its perfectivity, but because of the inceptive value of the imperfective. The consecutive perfect is not, as is claimed, an imperfective form, but a perfective one, motivating its most common use, i.e., that of logical succession.

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